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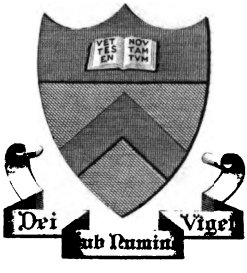

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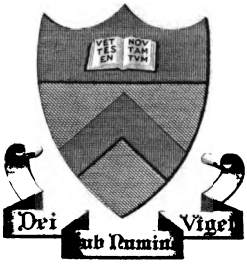

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AL'ABRI,

OR

THE TENT PITCH'D.

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AL'ABRI,

OR

THE TENT PITCH'D.

BY N. P. WILLIS.

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PREFACE.

THE Letters which form the present volume, were written in the Valley of the Susquehannah, from a beautiful glen some eighty miles above Wyoming. The author, after many years' travel in Europe and the East, has there "pitched his tent." The letters were addressed to the friend to whom they are inscribed; but, as they embody a freshly-drawn picture of the scenery and mode of life on the banks of the beautiful river, celebrated by the muse of Campbell, it has been thought worth while to collect them in a volume for publication. For two or three exquisite sketches of this part of the Valley of the Susquehannah, the reader is referred to the work on American Scenery now in publication from drawings by Bartlett.

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THE TENT PITCH'D.

LETTER I.

My Dear Doctor.—Twice in the year, they say, the farmer may sleep late in the morning—between hoeing and haying, and between harvest and thrashing. If I have not written to you since the frost was out of the ground, my apology lies distributed over the "spring work," in due proportions among ploughing, harrowing, sowing, plastering and hoeing. We have finished the last—some thanks to the crows, who saved us the labor of one acre of corn, by eating it in the blade. Think what times we live in, when even the crows are obliged to anticipate their income!

When I had made up my mind to write to you, I cast about for a cool place in the shade—for, besides the changes which farming works upon my *epidermis*, I find some in the inner man, one of which is a vegetable necessity for living out of doors. Between five in the morning and "flower-shut," I feel as if four walls and a ceiling would stop my breath. Very much to the disgust of William, (who begins to think it was *infra dig.* to have followed such a hob-nail from London,) I showed the first symptom of this chair-and-carpet asthma, by ordering my breakfast under a balsam-fir. Dinner and tea soon followed; and now, if I go in-doors by daylight,

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it is a sort of fireman's visit—in and out with a long breath. I have worn quite a dial on the grass, working my chair around with the sun.

"If you ever observed," (a phrase with which a neighbor of mine ludicrously prefaces every possible remark,) a single tree will do very well to sit, or dine, or be buried under, but you cannot *write* in the shade of it. Beside the sun-flecks and the light all around you, there is a want of that privacy, which is necessary to a perfect abandonment to pen and ink. I discovered this on getting as far as "dear Doctor," and, pocketing my tools, strolled away up the glen to borrow "stool and desk" of Nature. Half open, like a broad-leafed book, (green margin and silver type,) the brook-hollow of Glenmary spreads wide as it drops upon the meadow, but above, like a book that deserves its fair margent, it deepens as you proceed. Not far from the road, its little rivulet steals forth from a shadowy ravine, narrow as you enter, then widening back to a mimick cataract; and here, a child would say, is fairy-parlor. A small platform, (an island when the stream is swollen,) lies at the foot of the fall, carpeted with the fine silky grass which thrives with shade and spray. The two walls of the ravine are mossy, and trickling with springs; the trees overhead interlace, to keep out the sun; and down comes the brook, over a flight of precipitous steps, like children bursting out of school, and after a laugh at its own tumble, it falls again into a decorous ripple, and trips murmuring away. The light is green, the leaves of the overhanging trees look translucent above, and the wild

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blue grape, with its emerald rings, has wove all over it a basket-lattice so fine, that you would think it were done to order—warranted to keep out the hawk, and let in the humming-bird. With a yellow pine at my back, a moss cushion beneath, and a ledge of flat stone at my elbow, you will allow I had a secretary's outfit. I spread my paper, and mended my pen; and then, (you will pardon me, dear Doctor,) I forgot you altogether. The truth is, these fanciful garnishings spoil work. Silvio Pellico had a better place to write in. If it had been a room with a Chinese paper, (a bird standing for ever on one leg, and a tree ruffled by the summer wind, and fixed with its leaves on edge, as if petrified with the varlet's impudence,) the eye might get accustomed to it. But first came a gold-robin, twittering out his surprise to find strange company in his parlor, yet never frighted from his twig by pen and ink. By the time I had sucked a lesson out of that, a squirrel tripped in without knocking, and sat nibbling at a last-year's nut, as if nobody but he took thought for the morrow. Then came an enterprising ant, climbing my knee like a discoverer; and I wondered whether Fernando Cortes would have mounted so boldly, had the peak of Darien been as new-dropped between the Americas, as my leg by his ant-hill. By this time, a small dripping from a moss-fringe at my elbow betrayed the lip of a spring; and, dislodging a stone, I uncovered a brace of lizards lying snug in the ooze. We flatter ourselves, thought I, that we drink first of the spring. We do not know always whose lips were before us.

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Much as you see of insect life, and hear of bird-music, as you walk abroad, you should lie *perdu* in a nook, to know how much is frighted from sight, and hushed from singing, by your approach. What worms creep out when they think you gone, and what chatterers go on with their story! So among friends, thought I, as I fished for the moral. We should be wiser, if we knew what our coming hides and silences, but should we walk so undisturbed on our way?

You will see with half a glance, dear Doctor, that here was too much company for writing. I screwed up my inkstand once more, and kept up the bed of the stream till it enters the forest, remembering a still place by a pool. The tall pines hold up the roof high as an umbrella of Brobdignag, and neither water brawls, nor small birds sing, in the gloom of it. Here, thought I, as far as they go, the circumstances are congenial. But, as Jean Paul says, there is a period of life when the real gains ground upon the ideal; and to be honest, dear Doctor, I sat leaning on the shingle across my knees, counting my sky-kissing pines, and reckoning what they would bring in saw-logs—so much standing—so much drawn to the mill. Then there would be wear and tear of bob-sled, teamster's wages, and your dead pull springs—the horses' knees. I had nearly settled the *per* and *contra*, when my eye lit once more on "my dear Doctor," staring from the unfilled sheet, like the ghost of a murdered resolution. "Since when," I asked, looking myself sternly in the face, "is it so difficult to be virtuous! Shall I not write when I have a mind? Shall I reckon pelf whether I will

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or no? Shall butterfly-imagination thrust iron-heart to the wall? No!"

I took a straight cut through my ruta-baga patch and corn-field, bent on finding some locality, (out of doors it must be,) with the average attractions of a sentry-box, or a church-pew. I reached the high-road, making insensibly for a brush dam, where I should sit upon a log, with my face abutted upon a wall of chopped saplings. I have not mentioned my dog, who had followed me cheerfully thus far, putting up now and then a partridge, to keep his nose in; but, on coming to the bridge over the brook, he made up his mind. "My master," he said, (or looked,) "will neither follow the game, nor sit in the cool. *Chacun à son gout.* I'm tired of this bobbing about for nothing in a hot sun." So, dousing his tail, (which, "if you ever observed," a dog hoists, as a flag-ship does her pennant, only when the commodore is aboard,) he sprung the railing, and spread himself for a snooze under the bridge. "*Ben trovato!*" said I, as I seated myself by his side. He wagged his tail half round to acknowledge the compliment, and I took to work like a hay-maker.

I have taken some pains to describe these difficulties to you, dear Doctor, partly because I hold it to be fair, in this give-and-take world, that a man should know what it costs his fellow to fulfil obligations, but more especially, to apprise you of the *metempsychose* that is taking place in myself. You will have divined, ere this, that, in my out-of-doors life, I am approaching a degree nearer to Arcadian perfectability, and that, if I but manage to get a bark on and live by sap, (spare your wit, sir,) I

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shall be rid of much that is troublesome, not to say expensive, in the matters of drink and integument. What most surprises me in the past, is, that I ever should have confined my free soul and body, in the many very narrow places and usages I have known in towns. I can only assimilate myself to a squirrel, brought up in a school-boy's pocket, and let out some June morning on a snake fence.

The spring has been damp for corn, but I had planted on a warm hill-side, and have done better than my neighbors. The Owaga* Creek, which makes a bend round my meadow before it drops into the Susquehannah, (a swift, bright river the Owaga, with as much water as the Arno at Florence,) overflowed my cabbages and onions, in the May freshet; but that touches neither me nor my horse. The winter wheat looks like "velvet of three-pile," and every thing is out of the ground, including, in my case, the buckwheat, which is not yet *put in*. This is to be an old-fashioned hot summer, and I shall sow late. The peas are podded. Did it ever strike you, by the way, that the pious Æneas, famous through all ages for carrying old Anchises a mile, should, after all, yield glory to a *bean*. Perhaps you never observed, that this filial esculent *grows up* with his father on his back.

In my "new light," a farmer's life seems to me what a manufacturer's might resemble, if his factory were an indigenous plant—machinery, girls and all. What spin-

* Corrupted now to Owego. Ochwaga was the Indian word, and means *swift water*.

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dles and fingers it would take to make an orchard, if nature found nothing but the raw seed, and rain-water and sunshine were brought as far as a cotton bale! Your despised cabbage would be a prime article—if you had to weave it. Pumpkins, if they ripened with a hair-spring and patent lever, would be, "by'r lady," a curious invention. Yet these, which Aladdin nature produces if we but "rub the lamp," are more necessary to life than clothes or watches. In planting a tree, (I write it reverently,) it seems to me working immediately with the divine faculty. Here are two hundred forest trees set out with my own hand. Yet how little is my part in the glorious creatures they become!

This reminds me of a liberty I have lately taken with nature, which I ventured upon with proper diffidence, though the dame, as will happen with dames, proved less coy than was predicted. The brook at my feet, from its birth in the hills till it dropped into the meadow's lap, tripped down like a mountain-maid with a song, bright and unsullied. So it flowed by my door. At the foot of the bank, its song and sparkle ceased suddenly, and, turning under the hill, its waters disappeared among sedge and rushes. It was more a pity, because you looked across the meadow to the stately Owaga, and saw that its unfulfilled destiny was to have poured its brightness into his. The author of Ernest Maltravers has set the fashion of charity to such fallings away. I made a new channel over the meadow, gravelled its bed and grassed its banks, and, (last and best charity of all,) protected its recovered course with overshadowy trees.

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Not quite with so gay a sparkle, but with a placid and tranquil beauty, the lost stream glides over the meadow, and, Maltravers-like, the Owaga takes her lovingly to his bosom. The sedge and rushes are turned into a garden, and if you drop a flower into the brook at my door, it scarce loses a breath of its perfume before it is flung on the Owaga, and the Susquehanna robs him of it but with his life.

I have scribbled away the hours till near noon, and it is time to see that the oxen get their potatoes. Faith! it's a cool place under a bridge. Knock out the two ends of the Astor-house, and turn the Hudson through the long passage, and you will get an idea of it. The breeze draws through here deftly, the stone-wall is cool to my back, and this floor of running water, besides what the air steals from it, sounds and looks refreshingly. My letter has run on, till I am inclined to think the industry of running water "breeds i'the brain." Like the tin-pot at the cur's tail, it seems to overtake one with an admonition, if he but slack to breathe. Be not alarmed, dear Doctor, for, *sans* potatoes, my oxen will *loll* in the furrow, and though the brook run till doomsday, I must stop here. Amen.

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LETTER II.

My Dear Doctor—I have just had a visit from the assessor. As if a man should be taxed for a house, who could be luxurious under a bridge! I have felt a decided "call" to disclaim roof and threshold, and write myself down a vagabond. Fancy the variety of abodes open, rent-free, to a bridge-fancier. It is said among the settlers, that where a stranger finds a tree blown over, (the roots forming, always, an upright and well-matted wall,) he has only his house to *finish*. Cellar and chimney-back are ready done to his hand. But, besides being roofed, walled, and watered, and better situated and more plenty than over-blown trees—bridges are on no man's land. You are no "squatter," though you sit upon your hams. You may shut up one end with pine boughs, and you have a room *a-la-mode*—one large window open to the floor. The view is of banks and running water—exquisite of necessity. For the summer months I could imagine this bridge-gipsying delicious. What furniture might pack in a donkey-cart, would set forth a better apartment than is averaged in hotels, (so yclept,) and the saving to your soul, (of sins

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committed, sitting at a bell-rope, ringing in vain for water,) would be worthy a conscientious man's attention.

I will not deny that the bridge of Glenmary is a favorable specimen. As its abutments touch my cottage-lawn, I was under the necessity of presenting the public with a new bridge, for which act of munificence I have not yet received the freedom of the town. Perhaps I am expected to walk through it when I please, without asking. The hitherward railing coming into the line of my fence, I have, in a measure, a private entrance; and the whole structure is overshadowed by a luxuriant tree. To be sure, the beggar may go down the bank in the road, and, entering by the other side, sit under it as well as I—but he is welcome. I like society *sans-géne* —where you may come in or go out without apology, or whistle, or take off your shoes. And I would give notice here to the beggary of Tioga, that in building a stone seat under the bridge, and laying the banks with green-sward, I intend no sequestration of their privileges. I was pleased that a swallow, who had laid her mud-nest against a sleeper overhead, took no offence at my improvements. Her three nestlings made large eyes when I read out what I have scribbled, but she drowses on without astonishment. She is a swallow of last summer, and has seen authors.

A foot-passenger has just gone over the bridge, and, little dreaming there were four of us listening, (the swallows and I,) he leaned over the railing, and ventured upon a soliloquy. "Why don't he cut down the trees so's he can see out?" said my unconscious adviser. I caught

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the eye of the mother-swallow, and fancied she was amused. Her swallowlings looked petrified at the sacrilegious suggestion. By the way, it is worthy of remark, that though her little ones have been hatched a week, this estimable parent still *sits upon their heads*. Might not this continued incubation be tried with success upon backward children? We are so apt to think babies are finished when their bodies are brought into the world!

For some minutes, now, I have observed an occasional cloud rising from the bottom of the brook, and, peering among the stones, I discovered one of the small lobsters with which the streams abound. (The naturalists may class them differently, but as there is but one, and he has all the armament of a lobster, though on the scale of a shrimp, the swallows agree with me in opinion that he should rank as a lobster.) So we are five. "Cocksnouns!" to borrow Scott's ejaculation, people should never be too sure that they are unobserved. When I first came under the bridge, I thought myself alone.

This lobster puts me in mind of Talleyrand. You would say he is going backward, yet he gets on faster that way than the other. After all, he is a great man who can turn his reverses to account, and that I take to be, oftentimes, one of the chief secrets of greatness. If I were in politics, I would take the lobster for my crest. It would be ominous, I fear, in poetry.

You should come to the country now, if you would see the glory of the world. The trees have been coquetting at their toilet, waiting for warmer weather; but now I

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think they have put on their last flounce and furbelow, spread their bustle, and stand to be admired. They say "*leafy June.*" To-day is the first of July, and though I give the trees my first morning regard (out-of-doors) when my eyes are clearest, I have not fairly thought till to-day, that the foliage was full. If it were not for lovers and authors, who keep vigil and count the hours, I should suspect there was foul play between sun and moon—a legitimate day made away with now and then. (The crime is not unknown in the upper circles. Saturn devoured his children.)

There is a glory in potatoes—well hoed. Corn—the swaying and stately maize—has a visible glory. To see the glory of turnips, you must own the crop, and have cattle to fat—but they *have* a glory. Pease need no pæan—they are appreciated. So are not cabbages, which, though beautiful as a Pompeian wine-cup, and honored above roses by the lingering of the dew, are yet despised of all handicrafts—save one. Apt emblem of ancient maidenhood, which is despised, like cabbages, yet cherishes unsunned in its bosom the very dew we mourn so inconsistently when rifled from the rose.

Apropos—the delicate tribute in the last sentence shall serve for an expiation. In a journey I made through Switzerland, I had for chance-travelling companions, three Scotch ladies, of the class emulated by this chaste vegetable. They were intelligent, refined, and lady-like; yet in some Pencillings by the Way, (sketched, perhaps, upon an indigestion of mountain cheese, or an acidity of bad wine—such things affect us,) I was perverse

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enough to jot down a remark, more invidious than just. We are reached with a long whip for our transgressions, and, but yesterday, I received a letter from the Isle of Man, of which thus runs an extract :—" In your description of a dangerous pass in Switzerland, you mention travelling in the same public conveyance with three Scotch spinsters, and declare you would have been alarmed, had there been any neck in the carriage you cared for, and assert, that neither of your companions would have hesitated to leap from a precipice, had there been a lover at the bottom. Did either of us tell you so, sir? Or what ground have you for this assertion? You could not have judged of us by your own beautiful countrywomen, for they are proverbial for delicacy of feeling. You had not yet made the acquaintance of mine. We, therefore, must appropriate entirely to ourselves the very flattering idea of having inspired such an opinion. Yet allow me to assure you, sir, that lovers are by no means so scarce in my native country, as you seem to imagine. No Scotchwoman need go either to Switzerland, or Yankee-land, in search of them. Permit me to say then, sir, that as the attack was so public, an equally public *amende honorable* is due to us."

I make it here. I retract the opinion altogether. I do *not* think you "would have leaped from the precipice, had there been a lover at the bottom." On the contrary, dear Miss ——, I think you would have waited till he climbed up. The *amende*, I flatter myself, could scarce be more complete. Yet I will make it stronger if you wish.

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As I look out from under the bridge, I see an oriel sitting upon a dog-wood tree of my planting. His song drew my eye from the paper. I find it difficult, now, not to take to myself the whole glory of tree, song, and plumage. By an easy delusion, I fancy he would not have come but for the beauty of the tree, and that his song says as much, in bird-recitative. I go back to one rainy day of April, when, hunting for maple saplings, I stopped under that graceful tree, in a sort of island jungle, and wondered what grew so fair that was so unfamiliar, yet with a bark like the plumage of the pencilled pheasant. The limbs grew curiously. A lance-like stem, and, at regular distances a cluster of radiating branches, like a long cane thrust through inverted parasols. I set to work with spade and pick, took it home on my shoulder, and set it out by Glenmary brook, and there it stands to-day, in the full glory of its leaves, having just shed the white blossoms with which it kept holiday in June. Now the tree would have leaved and flowered, and the oriel, in black and gold, might perchance have swung and sung on the slender branch, which is still tilting with his effort in that last cadenza. But the fair picture it makes to my eye, and the delicious music in my ear, seem to me no less of my own making and awaking. Is it the same tree, flowering unseen in the woods, or transplanted into a circle of human love and care, making a part of a woman's home, and thought of and admired whenever she comes out from her cottage, with a blessing on the perfume and verdure? Is it the same bird, wasting his song in the

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thicket, or singing to me, with my whole mind afloat on his music, and my eyes fastened to his glittering breast? So it is the same block of marble, unmoved in the caves of Pentelicus, or brought forth and wrought under the sculptor's chisel. Yet the sculptor is allowed to *create*. Sing on, *my* bright oriel! Spread to the light and breeze your desiring fingers, *my* flowering tree! Like the player upon the organ, I take your glory to myself; though, like the hallelujah that burns under his fingers, your beauty and music worship God.

There are men in the world whose misfortune it is to think too little of themselves—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*. I would recommend to such to plant trees, and live among them. This suggesting to nature—working, as a master-mind, with all the fine mysteries of root and sap, obedient to the call—is very king-like. Then how elevating is the society of trees! The objection I have to a city, is the necessity, at every other step, of passing some acquaintance or other, with all his merits or demerits entirely through my mind—some man, perhaps, whose existence and vocation I have not suggested, (as I might have done were he a tree,)—whom I neither love, nor care to meet; and yet he is thrust upon my eye, and must be noticed. But to notice him with propriety, I must remember what he is—what claims he has to my respect, my civility. I must, in a minute, balance the account between my character and his, and, if he speak to me, remember his wife and children, his last illness, his mishap or fortune in trade, or whatever else it is necessary to mention in condolence or felicitation. A man

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with but a moderate acquaintance, living in a city, will pass through his mind each day, at a fair calculation, say two hundred men and women, with their belongings. What tax on the memory! What fatigue (and all profitless) to them and him! "Sweep me out like a foul thoroughfare!" say I. "The town has trudged through me!"

I like my mind to be a green lane, private to the dwellers in my own demesne. I like to be bowed to as the trees bow, and have no need to bow back or smile. If I am sad, my trees forego my notice without offence. If I am merry, or whimsical, they do not suspect my good sense, or my sanity. We have a constant itching (all men have, I think,) to measure ourselves by those about us. I would rather it should be a tree than a fop, or a politician, or a 'prentice. We grow to the nearest standard. We become Lilliputians in Lilliput. Let me grow up like a tree.

But here comes Tom Groom with an axe, as if he had looked over my shoulder, and started, apropos of trees.

"Is it that big button-ball you'll have cut down, sir?"

"Call it a sycamore, Tom, and I'll come and see." It is a fine old trunk, but it shuts out the village spire, and must come down.

Adieu, dear Doctor; you may call this a letter, if you will, but it is more like an essay.

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LETTER III.

Dear Doctor—There are some things that grow more certain with time and experience. Among them, I am happier for finding out, is the affinity which makes us friends. But there are other matters which, for me, observation and knowledge only serve to perplex, and among these is to know whose "education has been neglected." One of the first new lights which broke on me, was after my first day in France. I went to bed with a new-born contempt, mingled with resentment, in my mind, toward my venerable *alma mater*. The three most important branches of earthly knowledge, I said to myself, are, to understand French when it is spoken, to speak it so as to be understood, and to read and write it with propriety and ease. For accomplishment in the last, I could refer to my diploma, where the fact was stated on indestructible parchment. But, allowing it to speak the truth, (which was allowing a great deal,) there were the two preceding branches, in which, (most culpably to my thinking,) "my education *had* been neglected." Could I have taken out my brains, and, by simmering in a pot, have decocted Virgil, Homer, Playfair, Dugald Stewart, and Copernicus, all five, into one very

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small Frenchman—(what they had taught me to what he could teach)—I should have been content, though the fiend blew the fire.

I remember a beggarly Greek, who acquired an ascendancy over eight or ten of us, gentlemen and scholars, travelling in the east, by a knowledge of what esculents, growing wild above the bones of Miltiades, were "good for greens." We were out of provisions, and fain to eat with Nebuchadnezzar. "Hang grammar!" thought I, "here's a branch in which my education has been neglected." Who was ever called upon in his travels to conjugate a verb? Yet here, but for this degenerate Athenian, we had starved for our ignorance of what is edible in plants.

I had occasion, only yesterday, to make a similar remark. I was in a crowded church, listening to a Fourth of July oration; what with one sort of caloric and what with another, it was very uncomfortable, and a lady near me became faint. To get her out, was impossible, and there was neither fan, nor *sal volatile*, within twenty pews. The bustle, after awhile, drew the attention of an uncombed Yankee in his shirt-sleeves, who had stood in the aisle with his mouth open, gazing at the stage in front of the pulpit, and wondering, perhaps, what particular difference between sacred and profane oratory, required this pains-taking exhibition of the speaker's legs. Comprehending the state of the case at a single glance, the backwoodsman whipped together the two ends of his riding-switch, pulled his cotton handkerchief tightly over it, and, with this effective fan, soon raised a breeze

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that restored consciousness to the lady, besides cooling everybody in the vicinity. Here is a man, thought I, brought up to have his wits ready for an emergency. *His* "education has not been neglected."

To know nothing of sailing a ship, of farming, of carpentering, in short, of any trade or profession, may be a proper, though sometimes inconvenient ignorance. I only speak of such deficiencies, as a modest person will not confess without giving a reason—as a man who cannot swim will say he is liable to the cramp in deep water. With some reluctance, lately, I have brought myself to look after such dropped threads in my own woof of acquisitions, in the hope of mending them before they were betrayed by an exigency. Trout-fishing is one of these. I plucked up heart a day or two since, and drove to call upon a young sporting friend of mine, to whom I confessed, plump, I never had caught a trout. I knew nothing of flies, worms, rods, or hooks. Though I had seen in a book that "hog's down" was the material for the May-fly, I positively did not know on what part of that succulent quadruped the *down* was found.

"Positively?"

"Positively!"

My friend F. gravely shut the door to secure privacy to my ignorance, and took from his desk a volume—of flies! Here was new matter! Why, sir! your trout-fishing is a politician of the first *water!* Here were baits adapted to all the whims, weaknesses, states of appetite, even counter-baits to the very cunning, of the fish. Taking up the "Spirit of the Times" newspaper, his

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authority in all sporting matters, which he had laid down as I came in, he read a recipe for the construction of one out of the many of these seductive imitations, as a specimen of the labor bestowed on them. "The body is dubbed with hog's down, or light bear's hair mixed with yellow mohair, whipped with pale floss silk, and a small strip of peacock's herl for the head. The wings from the rayed feathers of the mallard, dyed yellow; the hackle from the bittern's neck, and the tail from the long hairs of the sable or ferret."

I cut my friend short midway in his volume, for, ever since my disgust at discovering that the perplexed grammar I had been whipped through was nothing but the art of talking correctly, which I could do before I I began, I have had an aversion to rudiments. "Frankly," said I, "dear F., my education has been neglected. Will you take me with you, trout-fishing, fish yourself, answer my questions, and assist me to pick up the science in my own scrambling fashion?"

He was good-natured enough to consent, and now, dear Doctor, you see to what all this prologue was tending. A day's trout-fishing may be a very common matter to you, but the sport was as new to me as to the trout. I may say, however, that of the two, I took to the novelty of the thing more kindly.

The morning after was breezy, and the air, without a shower, had become cool. I was sitting under the bridge, with my heels at the water's edge, reading a newspaper, while waiting for my breakfast, when a slight motion apprised me that the water had invaded my in-

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step. I had been wishing the sun had drank less freely of my brook, and within a few minutes of the wish, it had risen, doubtless, from the skirt of a shower in the hills beyond us. "Come!" thought I, pulling my boots out of the ripple, "so should arrive favours that would be welcome—no herald, and no weary expectation. A human gift so uses up gratitude with the asking and delaying." The swallow heard the increased babble of the stream, and came out of the air like a cimeter to see if her little ones were afraid, and the fussy lobster bustled about in his pool, as if there were more company than he expected. "*Semper paratus* is a good motto, Mr. Lobster!" "I will look after your little ones, Dame Swallow!" I had scarce distributed these consolations among my family, when a horse crossed the bridge at a gallop, and the head of my friend F. peered presently over the railing.

"How is your brook?"

"Rising, as you see!"

It was evident there had been rain west of us, and the sky was still gray—good-auspices for the fisher. In half an hour we were climbing the hill, with such contents in the waggon-box as my friend advised—the *debris* of a roast pig and a bottle of hock supposed to be included in the bait. As we got into the woods above, (part of my own small domain,) I could scarce help addressing my tall tenantry of trees. "Grow away, gentlemen," I would have said, had I been alone; "I rejoice in your prosperity. Help yourselves to the dew and the sunshine! If the showers are not sent to your liking, thrust your roots into my

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cellar, lying just under you, and moisten your clay without ceremony—the more the better." After all, trees have pleasant ways with them. It is something that they find their own food and raiment—something that they require neither watching nor care—something that they know, without almanack, the processions of the seasons, and supply, unprompted and unaided, the covering for their tender family of germs. So do not other and less profitable tenants. But it is more to me that they have no whims to be reasoned with, no prejudices to be soothed, no garrulity to reply or listen to. I have a peculiarity which this touches nearly. Some men "make a god of their belly;" some spend thought and cherishing on their feet, faces, hair—some few on their fancy or their reason. *I* am chary of my gift of speech. I hate to *talk* but for my pleasure. In common with my fellow-men, I have one faculty which distinguishes me from the brute—an articulate voice. I speak (I am warranted to believe) like my Maker and his angels. I have, committed to me, an instrument no human art has ever imitated, as incomprehensible in its fine and celestial mechanism, as the reason which controls it. Shall I breathe on this articulate wonder at every fool's bidding? Without reasoning upon the matter as I do now, I have felt indignant at the common adage, "words cost nothing!" It is a common saying in this part of the country, that "you may talk off ten dollars in the price of a horse." Those who have travelled in Italy, know well that in procuring any thing in that country, from a post-carriage to a paper of pins, you pay so much money, so much

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talk—the less talk the more money. I commenced all my bargains with a compromise—"You charge me ten scudi, and you expect me to talk you down to five. I know the price and the custom. Now, I will give you seven and a half if you will let me off the talk." I should be glad if all buying and selling were done by signs. It seems to me that talking on a sordid theme invades and desecrates the personal dignity. The "*scripta verba manent*" has no terrors for me. I could write that without a thought, which I would put myself to great inconveniences to avoid *saying*.

You, dear Doctor, among others, have often asked me how long I should be contented in the country. *Comment, diable!* ask, rather, how you are contented in a town! Does not every creature, whose name may have been mentioned to you—a vast congregation of nothinglings—stop you in the street, and, will you, nill you, make you perform on your celestial organ of speech—nay, even choose the theme out of his own littlenesses? When and how do you possess your thoughts, and their godlike interpreter, in dignity and peace? You are a man, of all others, worthy of the unsuggestive listening of trees. Your coinage of thought, profuse and worthy of a gift of utterance, is alloyed and depreciated by the promiscuous admixtures of a town. Who ever was struck with the majesty of the human voice in the street? Yet, who ever spoke, the meanest, in the solitude of a temple, or a wilderness, or in the stillness of night—wherever the voice is alone heard—without an awe of his own utterance—a feeling as if he had exercised a gift, which had in it something of the supernatural?

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The Indian talks to himself, or to the Great Spirit, in the woods, but is silent among men. We take many steps toward civilization as we get on in life, but it is an error to think that the heart keeps up with the manners. At least, with me, the perfection of existence seems to be, to possess the arts of social life, with the simplicity and freedom of the savage. They talk of "unbridled youth!" Who would not have borne a rein at twenty, he scorns at thirty? Who does not, as his manhood matures, grow more impatient of restraint—more unwilling to submit to the conventional tyrannies of society—more ready, if there were half a reason for it, to break through the whole golden but enslaving mesh of society, and start fresh, with Nature and the instincts of life, in the wilderness. The imprisonment to a human eye may be as irksome as a fetter—yet they who live in cities are never loosed. Did you ever stir out of doors without remembering that you were *seen?*

I have given you my thoughts as I went by my tall foresters, dear Doctor, for it is a part of trout-fishing, as quaint Izaak held it, to be stirred to musing and reverie by the influences of nature. In this free air, too, I scorn to be tied down to "the proprieties." Nay, if it come to that, why should I finish what I begin? Dame swallow, to be sure, looks curious to hear the end of my first lesson with the angle. But no! rules be hanged! I do not live on a wild brook to be plagued with rhetoric. I will seal up my letter where I am, and go a-field. You shall know what we brought home in the basket, when I write again.

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LETTER IV.

My Dear Doctor,—Your letters, like yourself, travel in the best of company. What should come with your last, but a note from our friend Stetson of the Astor, forwarding a letter which a traveller had left in the bronze vase, with "something enclosed which feels like a key." "*A key*," quotha! Attar of jasmine, subtle as the breath of the prophet from Constantinople by private hand! No less! The small gilt bottle, with its cubical edge and cap of parchment, lies breathing before me. I think you were not so fortunate as to meet Bartlett, the draftsman of the American scenery—the best of artists in his way, and the pleasantest of John Bulls, *any way*. He travelled with me a summer here, making his sketches, and has since been sent by the same enterprising publisher, (Virtue, of Ivy Lane,) to sketch in the Orient. ("Stand by," as Jack says, for something glorious from that quarter.) Well—pottering about the Bezestein, he fell in with my old friend Mustapha, the attar-merchant, who lifted the silk curtains for him, and over sherbet and spiced coffee in the inner divan, questioned him of America—a country which, to Mustapha's

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fancy, is as far beyond the moon as the moon is beyond the gilt tip of the seraglio. Bartlett told him the sky was round in that country, and the women faint and exquisite as his own attar. Upon which Mustapha took his pipe from his mouth, and praised Allah. After stroking the smoke out of his beard, and rolling his idea over the whites of his eyes for a few minutes, the old merchant pulled from under his silk cushion, a visiting-card, once white, but stained to a deep orange with the fingering of his fat hand, unctuous from bath-hour to bath-hour with the precious oils he traffics in. When Bartlett assured him he had seen me in America, (it was the card I had given the old Turk at parting, that he might remember my name,) he settled the curtains which divide the small apartment from the shop, and commanding his huge Ethiopian to watch the door, entered into a description of our visit to the forbidden recesses of the slave-market, of his purchase, (for me,) of the gipsy Maimuna, and some other of my six weeks' adventures in his company—for Mustapha and I, wherever it might lie in his fat body, had a nerve in unison. We mingled like two drops of the oil of roses. At parting, he gave Bartlett this small bottle of jasmine, to be forwarded to me, with much love, at his convenience; and, with the perfume of it in my nostrils, and the corpulent laugh of old Mustapha ringing in my ear, I should find it difficult at this moment to say how much of me is under this bridge in Tioga, North America. I am not sure that my letter should not be dated "attar shop, near the seraglio," for there, it seems to me, I am writing.

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"Tor-mentingest growin' time, aint it!" says a neighbor, leaning over the bridge at this instant, and little thinking that on that breath of his I travelled from the Bosphorus to the Susquehannah. Really, they talk of steamers, but there is no travelling conveyance like an interruption. A minute since, I was in the capital of the Palæologi, smoking a *narghile* in the Turk's shop. *Presto!* here I am in the county Tiog', sitting under a bridge, with three swallows and a lobster, (not three lobsters at a swallow—as you are very likely to read it in your own careless way,) and no outlay for coals or canvass. Now, why should not this be reduced to a science —like steam! I'll lend the idea to the cause of knowledge. If a man may travel from Turkey to New-York on a passing remark, what might be done on a long sermon? At present, the agent is irregular, so was steam. The performance of the journey, at present, is compulsory. So was travelling by steam before Fulton. The discoveries in animal magnetism justify the most sanguine hopes on the subject, and "open up," as Mr. Bulwer would express it, a vast field of novel discovery.

The truth is, (I have been sitting a minute thinking it over,) the chief obstacle and inconvenience in travelling is the prejudice in favor of taking the body with us. It is really a preposterous expense. Going abroad exclusively for the benefit of the mind, we are at no little trouble, in the first place, to provide the means for the body's subsistence on the journey, (the mind not being subject to "charges,") and then, besides trailing after us through ruins and galleries, a companion who takes

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no enjoyment in pictures or temples, and is perpetually incommoded by our enthusiasm, we undergo endless vexation and annoyance with the care of his baggage. Blessed be Providence, the mind is independent of boots and linen. When the system above hinted at is perfected, we can leave our box-coats at home, *item* pantaloons for all weathers, *item* cravats, flannels, and innumerable hose. I shall use my portmanteau to send eggs to market, with chickens in the two carpet-bags. My body I shall leave with the dairy-woman, to be fed at milking-time. Probably, however, in the progress of knowledge, there will be some discovery by which it can be closed in the absence of the mind, like a town-house when the occupant is in the country—blinds down, and a cobweb over the key-hole.

In all the prophetic visions of a millenium, the chief obstacle to its progress is the apparently undiminishing necessity for the root of all evil. Intelligence is diffusing, law becoming less merciless, ladies driving hoops, and (I have observed) a visible increase of marriages between elderly ladies and very young gentlemen—the last a proof that the affections (as will be universally true in the millenium) *may* retain their freshness in age. But among all these lesser beginnings, the philanthropist has hitherto despaired, for, to his most curious search, there appeared no symptom of beginning to live without money. May we not discern in this system, (by which the mind, it is evident, may perform some of the most expensive functions of the body,) a dream of moneyless millenium—a first step towards that blessed era when

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"Biddle and discounts" will be read of like "Aaron and burnt-offerings"—ceremonies which once made it necessary for a high priest, and an altar at which the innocent suffered for the guilty, but which shall have passed away in the blessed progress of millenium?

If I may make a grave remark to you, dear Doctor, I think the whole bent and spirit of the age we live in, is, to make light of *matter*. Religion, which used to be seated in the heart, is, by the new light of Channing, addressed purely to the intellect. The feelings and passions, which are bodily affections, have less to do with it than the mind. To eat with science and drink hard, were once passports to society. To think shrewdly and talk well, carry it now. Headaches were cured by pills, which now yield to magnetic fluid—nothing so subtle. If we travelled once, it must be by pulling of solid muscle. Rarefied air does it now better than horses. War has yielded to negotiation. A strong man is no better than a weak one. Electro-magnetism will soon do all the work of the world, and men's muscles will be so much weight—no more. The amount of it is, that *we are gradually learning to do without our bodies*. The next great discovery will probably be some pleasant contrivance for getting out of them, as the butterfly sheds his worm. Then, indeed, having no pockets, and no "*corpus*" for your "*habeas*," we can dispense with money and its consequences, and lo! the millenium! Having no stomachs to care for, there will be much cause of sin done away, for, in most penal iniquities, the stomach is at the bottom. Think what smoothness will follow in

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"the cause of true love"—money coming never between! It looks ill for your profession, dear Doctor. We shall have no need of physic. The fee will go to him who "ministers to the *mind* diseased"—probably the clergy. (*Mem.* to put your children in the church.) I am afraid crowded parties will go out of fashion—it would be so difficult to separate one's globule in case of "mixed society"—yet the extrication of gases might be improved upon. Fancy a lady and gentleman made "common air" of, by the mixture of their "oxygen and hydrogen!"

What most pleases me in the prospect of this Swedenborg order of things, is the probable improvement in the laws. In the physical age passing away, we have legislated for the protection of the body, but no pains or penalties for wounds upon its more sensitive inhabitant—murder to break the snail's *shell*, but innocent pastime to thrust a pin into the snail. In the new order of things, we shall have penal laws for the protection of the sensibilities—whether they be touched through the fancy, the judgment, or the personal dignity. Those will be days for poets! Critics will be hanged—or worse: A sneer will be manslaughter. Ridicule will be a deadly weapon, only justifiable when used in defence of life. For scandal, imprisonment from ten to forty years, at the mercy of the court. All attacks upon honor, honesty, or innocence, capital crimes. That the London Quarterly ever existed, will be classed with such historical enormities as the Inquisition, and torture for witchcraft; and

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"to be *Lockharted*," will mean, then, what "to be *Burked*" means now.

You will say, dear Doctor, that I am the "ancient mariner" of letter-writers—telling my tale out of all *apropos-ity*. But after some consideration, I have made up my mind, that a man who is at all addicted to reverie, must have one of two escape-valves—a journal, or a very random correspondence. For reasons many and good, I prefer the latter; and the best of those reasons is my good fortune in possessing a friend like yourself, who is above "proprieties," (prosodically speaking,) and so you have become to me, what Asia was to Prometheus—

> "When his being overflowed,
> Was like a golden chalice to bright wine,
> Which else had sunk into the thirsty dusk."

Talking of trout. We emerged from the woods of Glenmary, (you left me there in my last letter,) and rounding the top of the hill, which serves for my sunset drop-curtain, we ran down a mile to a brook in the bed of a low valley. It rejoices in no name, that I could hear of; but, like much that is uncelebrated, it has its virtues. Leaving William to tie the horse to a hemlock, and bring on the basket, we started up the stream, and coming to a cold spring, my friend sat down to initiate me into the rudiments of preparing the fly. A very gay-coated gentleman was selected, rather handsomer than your horse-fly, and whipped upon a rod quite too taper for a comparison.

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"What next?"

"Take a bit of worm out of the tin box, and cover the barb of the hook!"

"I will. Stay! where are the *bits?* I see nothing here but full-length worms, crawling about, with every one his complement of extremities—not a tail astray."

"Bah! pull a bit off!"

"What! you don't mean that I am to pull one of these squirming unfortunates in two?"

"Certainly!"

"Well, come! that seems to me rather a liberty. I grant you 'my education has been neglected,' but, my dear F., there is mercy in a guillotine. I had made up my mind to the death of the fish, but this preliminary—horror!"

"Come! don't be a woman!"

"I wish I were—I should have a pair of scissors. Fancy having your leg *pulled* off, my good fellow. I say it is due to the poor devil that the operation be as short as possible. Suppose your thumb slips?"

"Why, the worm feels nothing! Pain is in the imagination. Stay! I'll do it for you—there!"

What the remainder of the worm felt, I had no opportunity of observing, as my friend thrust the tin box into his pocket immediately; but the "bit" which he dropped into the palm of my hand, gave every symptom of extreme astonishment, to say the least. The passing of the barb of the hook three times through him, seemed rather to increase his vitality, and looked to me as little like happiness as any thing I ever saw on an excursion

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of pleasure. Far be it from me, to pretend to more sensibility than Christopher North, or Izaak Walton. The latter had his humanities; and Wilson, of all the men I have ever seen, carries, most marked in his fine face, the philtre which bewitches affection. But, emulous as I am of their fame as anglers, and modest as I should feel at introducing innovations upon an art so refined, I must venture upon some less primitive instrument than thumb and finger, for the dismemberment of worms. I must take scissors.

I had never seen a trout caught in my life, and I do not remember at this moment ever having, myself, caught a fish, of any genus or gender. My first lesson, of course, was to see the thing done. F. stole up to the bank of the stream, as if his tread might wake a naiad, and threw his fly into a circling, black pool, sparkling with brilliant bubbles, which coiled away from a small brook-leap in the shade. The same instant the rod bent, and a glittering spotted creature rose into the air, swung to his hand, and was dropped into the basket. Another fling, and a small trail of the fly on the water, and another followed. With the third, I felt a curious uneasiness in my elbow, extending quickly to my wrist—the tingling of a new-born enthusiasm. F. had taken *up* the stream, and with his lips apart, and body bent over, like a mortal surprising some troop of fays at revel, it was not reasonable to expect him to remember his pupil. So, silently I turned *down*, and at the first pool threw in my fly. Something bright seemed born at the instant under it, and the slight tilting pull upon the pole, took me

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so much by surprise, that for a second I forgot to raise it. Up came the bright trout, raining the silver water from his back, and at the second swing through the air, (for I had not yet learned the sleight of the fisher to bring him quick to hand,) he dropped into the pool, and was gone. I had already begun to take his part against myself, and detected a pleased thrill, at his escape, venturing through my bosom. I sat down upon a prostrate pine, to new-Shylock my poor worm. The tin box was in F.'s pocket! Come! here was a relief. As to the wild-wood worms that might be dug from the pine-tassels under my feet, I was incapable of violating their forest sanctuary. I would fish no more. I had had my pleasure. It is not like pulling up a stick or a stone, to pull up a resisting trout. It is a peculiar sensation, unimaginable till felt. I should like to be an angler very well, *but for the worm in my pocket.*

The brook at my feet, and around me, pines of the tallest lift, by thousands! You may *travel through* a forest, and look upon these communicants with the sky, as trees. But you cannot *sit still* in a forest, alone, and silent, without feeling the awe of their presence. Yet the brook ran and sang as merrily, in their black shadow, as in the open sunshine; and the woodpecker played his sharp hammer on a tree evergreen for centuries, as fearlessly as on a shivering poplar, that will be outlived by such a fish-catcher as I. Truly, this is a world in which there is small recognition of greatness. As it is in the forest, so it is in the town. The very gods would have their toes trod upon, if they walked without their wings. Yet

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let us take honor to ourselves above vegetables. The pine beneath me has been a giant, with his top in the clouds, but lies now, unvalued on the earth. We recognize greatness *when it is dead.* We are prodigal of love and honor when it is unavailing. We are, in something, above wood and stubble.

I have fallen into a sad trick, dear Doctor, of preaching sermons to myself, from these texts of nature. Sometimes, like other preachers, I pervert the meaning and forget the context, but reverie would lose its charm if it went by reason. Adieu! Come up to Glenmary, and catch trout if you will. But I will have your worms decently drowned before boxed for use. I cannot sleep o'nights, after slipping one of these harmless creatures out of his own mouth, in a vain attempt to pull him asunder.

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LETTER V.

My dear Doctor.—If this egg hatch without getting cold, or, to accommodate my language to your city apprehension, if the letter I here begin comes to a finishing, it will be *malgré* blistering hands and weary back—the consequences of hard raking—of *hay*. The men are taking their four o'clock of cheese and cider in the meadow, and not having simplified my digestion as rapidly as my habits, I have retired to the shelter of the bridge, to be decently rid of the master's first bit and pull at the pitcher. After employing my brains in vain, to discover why this particular branch of farming should require cider and cheese, (eaten together at no other season that I can learn,) I have pulled out my scribble-book from the niche in the sleeper overhead, and find, by luck, one sheet of *tabula rasa*, upon which you are likely to pay eighteen pence to Amos Kendall.

Were you ever in a hay-field, Doctor? I ask for information. Metaphorically, I know you "live in clover"—meaning, the society of wits, and hock of a certain vintage—but seriously, did you ever happen to stand on the natural soil of the earth, off the pavement? If you

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have not, let me tell you it is a very pleasant change. I have always fancied there was a mixture of the vegetable in myself; and I am convinced now, that there is something in us which grows more thriftily on fresh earth, than on flag-stones. There are some men indigenous to brick and mortar, as there are plants which thrive best with a stone on them; but there are "connecting links" between all the varieties of God's works, and such men verge on the mineral kingdom. I have seen whole geodes of them, with all the properties of flints, for example. But in you, my dear Doctor, without flattery, I think I see the vegetable, strong, though latent. You would thrive in the country, well planted and a little pruned. I am not sure it would do to *water* you freely—but you want sunshine and fresh air, and a little bird to shake the "dew" out of your top.

I see, from my seat under the bridge, a fair meadow, laid like an unrolled carpet of emerald, along the windings of a most bright and swift river. The first owner of it after the savage, all honor to his memory, sprinkled it with forest trees, now at their loftiest growth, here and there one, stately in the smooth grass, like a polished monarch on the foot-cloth of his throne. The river is the Owaga, and its opposite bank is darkened with thick wood, through which a liberal neighbour has allowed me to cut an eye-path to the village spire—a mile across the fields. From my cottage door across this meadow-lawn, steals, with silver foot, the brook I redeemed from its lost strayings, and, all along between brook and river, stand hay-cocks, not fairies. Now, possess me

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as well of your whereabout—what you see from your window in Broadway! Is there a sapling on my whole farm that would change root-hold with you?

The hay is heavy this year, and if there were less, I should still feel like taking off my hat to the meadow. There is nothing like living in the city, to impress one with the gratuitous liberality of the services rendered one in the country. Here are meadows now, that without hint or petition, pressing or encouragement, pay or consideration, nay, careless even of gratitude, shoot me up some billions of grass-blades, clover-flowers, white and red, and here and there a nodding regiment of lilies, tall as my chin, and it is understood, I believe, that I am welcome to it all. Now, you may think this is all easy enough, and the meadow is happy to be relieved; but so the beggar might think of your alms, and be as just. But you have made the money you give him by the sweat of your brow. So has the meadow its grass. "It is estimated," says the Book of Nature, "that an acre of grass-land transpires, in twenty-four hours, not less than six thousand four hundred quarts of water." Sweat me that without a fee, thou "dollar a visit!"

Here comes William from the post, with a handful of papers. The Mirror, with a likeness of Sprague. A likeness in a mirror could scarce fail, one would think, and here, accordingly, he is—the banker-poet, the Rogers of our country—fit as "himself to be his parallel." Yet I have never seen that stern look on him. We know he bears the "globe"* on his back, like old

* Mr. Sprague is cashier of the Globe Bank, Boston.

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Atlas, but he is more urbane than the world-bearer. He keeps a muscle unstrained for a smile. A more courteous gentleman stands not by Mammon's altar—no, nor by the lip of Helicon—yet this is somehow stern. In what character, if you please, Mr. Harding? Sat Plutus, or Apollo, astride your optic nerve when you drew that picture? It may be a look he has, but, fine head as it stands on paper, they who form from it an idea of the man, would be agreeably disappointed in meeting him. And this, which is a merit in most pictures, is a fault in one which posterity is to look at.

Sprague has the reputation of being a most able financier. Yet he is not a rich man. Best evidence in the world that he puts his genius into his calculations, for it is the nature of uncommon gifts to do good to all but their possessor. That he is a poet, and a true and high one, has been not so much acknowledged by criticism, as *felt* in the republic. The great army of editors, who paragraph upon one name, as an entry of college-boys will play upon one flute, till the neighborhood would rather listen to a voluntary upon shovel and tongs, have not made his name diurnal and hebdomadal; but his poetry is diffused by more unjostled avenues, to the understandings and hearts of his countrymen. I, for one, think he is a better banker for his genius, as with the same power he would have made a better soldier, statesman, farmer, what you will. I have seen excellent poetry from the hand of Plutus—(Biddle, I should have said, but I never scratch out, to you)—yet he has but ruffled the muse, while Sprague has courted her. Our

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Theodore,* *bien-aimé*, at the court of Berlin, writes a better despatch, I warrant you, than a fellow born of red tape, and fed on sealing-wax at the department. I am afraid the genius of poor John Quincy Adams is more limited. He is only the best President we have had since Washington—not a poet, though he has a volume in press. Briareus is not the father of all who will have a niche. Shelley would have made an unsafe banker, for he was prodigal of stuff. Pope, Rogers, Crabbe, Sprague, Halleck, waste no gold, even in poetry. Every idea gets his due of those poets, and no more; and Pope and Crabbe, by the same token, would have made as good bankers as Sprague and Rogers. We are under some mistake about genius, my dear Doctor. I'll just step indoors, and find a definition of it in the library.

Really, the sun is hot enough, as Sancho says, to fry the brains in a man's skull.

"Genius," says the best philosophical book I know of, "wherever it is found, and to whatever purpose directed, is mental power. It distinguishes the man of *fine phrensy*, as Shakspeare expresses it, from the man of *mere phrensy*. It is a sort of instantaneous insight, that gives us knowledge without going to school for it. Sometimes it is directed to one subject, sometimes to another; but under whatever form it exhibits itself, it enables the individual who possesses it, to make a wonderful, and almost miraculous progress, in the line of his pursuit."

Si non é vero, é ben trovato. If philosophy were more

* Theodore Fay, secretary of the American embassy to Prussia.

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popular, we should have Irving for President, Halleck for governor of Iowa, and Bryant envoy to Texas. But genius, to the multitude, is a phantom without mouth, pockets, or hands—incapable of work, unaccustomed to food, ignorant of the uses of coin, and unfit candidate, consequently, for any manner of loaves and fishes. A few more Spragues would leaven this lump of narrow prejudice.

I wish you would kill off your patients, dear Doctor, and contrive to be with us at the agricultural show. I flatter myself I shall take the prize for turnips. By the way, to answer your question while I think of it, that is the reason why I am not at Niagara, "taking a look at the viceroy." I must watch my turnip-ling. I met Lord Durham once or twice when in London, and once at dinner at Lady Blessington's. I was excessively interested, on that occasion, by the tactics of D'Israeli, who had just then chipped his political shell, and was anxious to make an impression on Lord Durham, whose glory, still to come, was confidently foretold in that bright circle. I rather fancy the dinner was made to give Vivian Grey the chance; for her ladyship, benevolent to every one, has helped D'Israeli to "imp his wing," with a devoted friendship, of which he should embody in his maturest work the delicacy and fervor. Women are glorious friends to stead ambition; but, effective as they all can be, few have the tact, and fewer the varied means, of the lady in question. The guests dropped in, announced but unseen, in the dim twilight; and, when Lord Durham came, I could only see that he was of

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middle stature, and of a naturally cold address. Bulwer spoke to him, but he was introduced to no one—a departure from the custom of that *maison sans-gêne*, which was either a tribute to his lordship's reserve, or a *ruse* on the part of Lady Blessington, to secure to D'Israeli the advantage of having his acquaintance sought—successful, if so; for Lord Durham, after dinner, requested a formal introduction to him. But for D'Orsay, who sparkles, as he does every thing else, out of rule, and in splendid defiance of others' dulness, the soup and first half hour of dinner would have passed off, with the usual English fashion of earnest silence. I looked over my spoon at the future premier, a dark, saturnine man, with very black hair, combed very smooth, and wondered how a heart, with the turbulent ambitions, and disciplined energies which were stirring, I knew, in his, could be concealed under that polished and marble tranquillity of mien and manner. He spoke to Lady Blessington in an under-tone, replying with a placid serenity that never reached a smile, to so much of D'Orsay's champagne wit as threw its sparkle in his way, and Bulwer and D'Israeli were silent altogether. I should have foreboded a dull dinner if, in the open brow, the clear sunny eye, and unembarrassed repose of the beautiful and expressive mouth of Lady Blessington, I had not read the promise of a change. It came presently. With a tact, of which the subtle ease and grace can in no way be conveyed into description, she gathered up the cobweb threads of conversation going on at different parts of the table, and, by the most apparent accident, flung them

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into D'Israeli's fingers, like the ribands of a four-in-hand. And, if so coarse a figure can illustrate it, he took the whip-hand like a master. It was an appeal to his opinion on a subject he well understood, and he burst at once, without preface, into that fiery vein of eloquence which, hearing many times after, and always with new delight, have stamped D'Israeli on my mind, as the most wonderful talker I have ever had the fortune to meet. He is any thing but a declaimer. You would never think him on stilts. If he catches himself in a rhetorical sentence, he mocks at it in the next breath. He is satirical, contemptuous, pathetic, humorous, every thing in a moment; and his conversation on any subject whatever, embraces the *omnibus rebus, et quibusdam aliis*. Add to this, that D'Israeli's is the most intellectual face in England—pale, regular, and overshadowed with the most luxuriant masses of raven-black hair; and you will scarce wonder that, meeting him for the first time, Lord Durham was (as he was expected to be by the Aspasia of that London Academe) impressed. He was not carried away as we were. That would have been unlike Lord Durham. He gave his whole mind to the brilliant meteor blazing before him; but the telescope of judgment was in his hand—to withdraw at pleasure. He has evidently, native to his blood, that great quality of a statesman—*retenu*. D'Israeli and he formed at the moment a finely-contrasted picture. Understanding his game perfectly, the author deferred, constantly and adroitly, to the opinion of his noble listener, shaped his argument by his suggestions, allowed him to say nothing

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without using it as the nucleus of some new turn to his eloquence, and all this, with an apparent effort against it, as if he had desired to address himself exclusively to Lady Blessington, but was compelled, by a superior intellectual magnetism, to turn aside and pay homage to her guest. With all this instinctive management, there was a flashing *abandon* in his language and choice of illustration, a kindling of his eye, and, what I have before described, a positive foaming at his lips, which, contrasted with the warm but clear and penetrating eye of Lord Durham, his calm yet earnest features, and lips closed without compression, formed, as I said, a picture, and of an order worth remembering in poetry. Without meaning any disrespect to D'Israeli, whom I admire as much as any man in England, I remarked to my neighbor, a celebrated artist, that it would make a glorious drawing of Satan tempting an archangel to rebel.

Well—D'Israeli is in Parliament, and Lord Durham on the last round but one of the ladder of *subject* greatness. The viceroy will be premier, no doubt; but it is questionable if the author of Vivian Grey does more than carry out the moral of his own tale. Talking at a brilliant table, with an indulgent and superb woman on the watch for wit and eloquence, and rising in the face of a cold common-sense House of Commons on the look-out for froth and humbug, are two different matters. In a great crisis, with the nation in a tempest, D'Israeli would flash across the darkness very finely—but he will never do for the calm right-hand of a premier. I wish him, I am sure, every success in the world; but I trust

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that whatever political reverses fall to his share, they will drive him back to literature.

I have written this last sentence in the red light of sunset, and I must be out to see my trees watered, and my kine driven a-field after their milking. What a coverlet of glory the day-god draws about him for his repose! I should like curtains of that burnt crimson. If I have a passion in the world, it is for that royal trade, upholstery; and so thought George the Fourth, and so thinks Sultan Mahmoud, who, with his own henna-tipped fingers, assisted by his assembled harem, arranges every fold of drapery in the seraglio. If poetry fail, I'll try the profession some day *en grand*, and meantime let me go out and study one of the three hundred and sixty-five varieties of couch-drapery in the west.

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LETTER VI.

My dear Doctor—Your letter contained

> "A few of the unpleasantest words
> That e'er were writ on paper!"

Why should you not pass August at Glenmary? Have your patients bought you, body and soul? Is there no "night-bell" in the city but yours? Have you no practice in the country, my dear Esculapius? Faith! I'll be ill! By the time you reach here, I shall be a "case." I have not had a headache now in twenty years, and my constitution requires a change. I'll begin by eating the cucumbers we had saved for your visit, and you know the consequences. Mix me a pill for the cholera—first, second, or third stage of the disease, according to your speed—and come with what haste you may. If you arrive too late, you lose your fee, but I'll return your visit, by the honor of a ghost.

By the way, as a matter of information, do you *charge* in such cases? Or, the man being dead, do you deduct for not feeling his pulse, nor telling him the name of his

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damaged organ in Latin? It should be half-price, I think, these items off. Let me know by express mail, as one likes to be prepared.

Since I wrote to you, I have added the Chemung river to my list of acquaintances. It was done *à l'improvista*, as most pleasant things are. We were driving to the village on some early errand, and met a friend at the cross-road, bound with an invalid to Avon Springs. He was driving his own horses, and proposed to us to set him a day's journey on his way. I had hay to cut, but the day was made for truants—bright, breezy, and exhilarating; and as I looked over my shoulder, the only difficulty vanished, for there stood a pedlar chaffering for a horn-comb with a girl at a well. We provided for a night's toilet from his tin-box, and easing off the check-reins a couple of holes, to enlighten my ponies as to the change in their day's work, we struck into the traveller's trot, and sped away into the eye of a south-west breeze, happy as urchins when the schoolmaster is on a jury.

When you come here, I shall drive you to the *Narrows* of the Susquehannah. That is a word, *nota bene*, which, in this degree of latitude, refers not at all to the breadth of the stream. It is a place where the mountain, like many a frowning coward, threatens to crowd its gentler neighbour, but gives room at its calm approach, and annoys nobody but the passer-by. The road between them, as you come on, looks etched with a thumb-nail along the base of the cliff, and you would think it a pokerish drive, making no allowance for perspective. The friable rock, however, makes rather a smooth single

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track, and if you have the inside when you meet farmer Giles or the stage-coach, you have only to set your hub against the rock, and "let them go by as likes." The majestic and tranquil river sweeps into the peaked shadow, and on again, with the disdain of a beauty used to conquer. It reminded me of Lady Blessington's "do if you dare!" when the mob at the House of Lords threatened to break her chariot windows. There was a calm courage in Miladi's French glove that carried her through, and so amid this mob of mountains, glides the Susquehannah to the sea.

While I am here, let me jot down an observation worthy the notice of Mr. Capability Brown. This cliff falls into a line of hills running from north-west to south-east, and, by five in the summer afternoon, their tall shoulders have nudged the sun, and the long, level road at their bases lies in deep shadow, for miles along the Owaga and Susquehannah. "Consequence is," as my friend of the "Albany Daily" says, we can steal a march upon twilight, and take a cool drive before tea. What the ruination shops on the west side of Broadway are to you, this spur of the Alleghanies is to me, (minus the plate-glass, and the temptations.) I value this—for the afternoons in July and August are hot and long; the breeze dies away, the flies get in-doors, and with the desire for motion, yet no ability to stir, one longs for a ride with Ariel through "the veins o' the earth." Mr. C. Brown now would mark me down, for this privilege of road well shaded, some twenty pound in the rent. He is a man in England who trades upon his taste.

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He goes to your country-seat to tell you what can be done with it—what are its unimproved advantages, what to do with your wood, and what with your water. He would rate this shady mountain as an eligibility in the site, to be reckoned, of course, as income. A very pleasant man is Mr. Brown!

It occurs to me, Doctor, that a new branch of this gentleman's profession might be profitable. Why not set up a shop to tell *people* what they can make of themselves? I have a great mind to take out a patent for the idea. The stock in trade would be two chairs and a green curtain—(for taste, like rouge, should be sold privately)—not expensive. I would advertise to see gentlemen in the morning, ladies in the evening, "secresy in all cases strictly observed." Few people of either sex know their own style. Your Madonna is apt to romp, for instance, and your romp to wear her hair plain and a rosary. Few ladies know what colors they look best in—whether smiles or tears are most becoming, whether they appear to most advantage sitting, like Queen Victoria and Tom Moore, (and this involves a delicate question,) or standing and walking. The world is full of people who *mistake their style*—fish for your net every one. How many women are never charming till they forget themselves! A belle is a woman who knows her weapons—colors, smiles, moods, caprices; who has looked at her face in the glass like an artist, and knows what will lighten a defect or enhance a beauty. The art is as rare as the belle. "*Pourquoy*, my dear knight." Because taste is, where knowledge

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was before the discovery of printing—locked up with the first possessor. Why should it not be diffused? What a refuge for reduced gentility would be such a vocation. What is now the disease of fortunes would be then their remedy; parents would cultivate a taste for eloquence in their children, because there is no knowing what they may come to—the reason, now, why they take pains to repress it.

I presume it is in consequence of the diffusion of printing that ignorance of the law is no apology for crime. Were taste within reach of all, (there might be dispensaries for the poor,) that "shocking bad hat" of yours, my dear Doctor, would be a criminal offence. Our fat friend with the long-tailed coat, and the waist at his shoulder-blades, would be liable to fine for misinforming the tailor as to the situation of his hips—the tailor of course not to blame, having nothing to go by. Two scandalous old maids together would be abated as a nuisance—as it is the *quantity* of tin-pots, which, in a concert upon that tintinnabulary instrument, constitutes a disturbance of the peace. The reform would be endless. I am not sure it could be extended to bad taste in literature, for, like rebellion, the crime would merge in the universality of the offenders. But it would be the general putting down of tame monsters, now loose on society. *Pensez y!*

What should you think of dining with a woman behind your chair worth seven hundred thousand pounds sterling—well invested? You may well stare—but unless a large number of sensible people are very much mistaken,

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you may do so any day, for some three shillings, at a small inn on the Susquehannah. Those who know the road, leave behind them a showy, porticoed tavern, new, and carefully divested of all trees and grass, and pull up at the door of the old inn at the place, a low, old-fashioned house, built on a brook-side, and with all the appearance of a comfortable farm-house, save only a leaning and antiquated sign-post. Here lives a farmer well off in the world, a good-natured old man, who for some years has not meant to keep open tavern, but from the trouble of taking down his sign-post, or the habit, and acquaintance with travellers, gives all who come what chance fare may be under the roof, and at the old prices common in days when the bill was not ridden by leagues of white paint and portico. His dame, the heiress, is a tall and erect woman of fifty, ("or, by'r lady, threescore,") a smiling, intelligent, ready hostess, with the natural manners of a gentlewoman. Now and then, a pale daughter, unmarried, and twenty-four or younger, looks into the whitewashed parlor, and if the farmer is home from the field, he sits down with his hat on, and lends you a chat with a voice sound and hearty as the smell of hay. It is altogether a pleasant place to loiter away the noon, and though it was early for dinner when we arrived, we put up our horses, (the men were all a-field,) and dame Raymond spread her white cloth, and set on her cherry-pie, while her daughter broiled for us the *de quoi* of the larder, in the shape of a salt mackerel. The key of the "bin" was in her pocket, and we were young enough,

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the dame said, as she gave it to us, to feed our own horses.

This good woman, or this great lady, is the only daughter, as I understand it, of an old farmer ninety years of age, who has fallen heir to an immense fortune in England. He was traced out several years ago by the executors, and the proper testimonials of the property placed in his hands; but he was old, and his child was well off and happy, and he refused to put himself to any trouble about it. Dame Raymond herself thought England a great way off; and the pride of her life is her fine chickens, and to go so far upon the strength of a few letters, leaving the farm and hen-roost to take care of themselves, was an undertaking which, she felt, justified farmer Raymond in shaking his head. Lately an enterprising gentleman in the neighborhood has taken the papers, and she consented to write to her father, who willingly made over to her all authority in the matter. The claim, I understand, is as well authenticated as paper evidence can make it, and the probability is, that in a few months dame Raymond will be more troubled with her riches than she ever was with her chickens.

We dined at our leisure, and had plenty of sharp gossip with the tall hostess, who stood to serve the tea from a side-table, and between our cups kept the flies from her tempting cherry-pie and brown sugar, with a large fan. I have not often seen a more shrewd and sensible woman, and she laughs and philosophizes about her large fortune in a way that satisfied me she would laugh just as cheerly if it should turn out a bubble. She said her

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husband had told her "it was best not to be proud till she got her money." The only symptom that I detected of castle-building, was a hint she let slip of hoping to entertain travellers, some day, in a better house. I coupled this with another remark, and suspected that the new tavern, with its big portico and blazing sign, had not taken the wind out of her sails without offence, and that, perhaps, the only use of her money, on which she had determined, was to build a bigger and eclipse the intruder.

I amused myself with watching her as she bustled about with old-fashioned anxiety to anticipate our wants, and fancying the changes to which the acquisition of this immense fortune might introduce her in England. There was her daughter, whom a little millinery would improve into a very presentable heiress, cooking our mackerel; while Mrs. Thwaites, the grocer's widow in London, with no more money probably, was beset by half the unmarried noblemen in England, Lord Lyndhurst, it is said, the most pressing. But speculation is endless, and you shall go down with your trout line, dear Doctor, and spin your own cobwebs while dame Raymond cooks your fish.

I have spun out my letter to such a length, that I have left myself no room to prate to you of the beauties of the Chemung, but you are likely to hear enough of it, for it is a subject with which I am just now something enamoured. I think you share with me my passion for rivers. If you have the grace to come and visit us, and I survive the cholera you have brought upon me, we will

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visit this new Naiad in company, and take dame Raymond in our way. Adieu.

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LETTER VII.

I AM of opinion, dear Doctor, that a letter to be read understandingly, should have marginal references to the state of the thermometer, the condition of the writer's digestion, and the quality of his pen and ink at the time of writing. These matters, if they do not affect a man's belief in a future state, very sensibly operate upon his style of composition, sometimes (so with me at least) upon his sentiments and minor morals.

Like most other pen-and-inklings in this be-printed country, I commenced authorship at precisely the wrong end—criticism. Never having put my hat upon more than one or two grown-up thoughts, I still feel myself qualified to pronounce upon any man's literary stature, from Walter Scott to whom you please—God forgive me! I remember (under this delusion of Sathan) sitting down to review a book by one of the most sensible women in this country. It was a pleasant morning—favorable symptom for the author. I wrote the name of the book at the head of a clean sheet of Bath post, and the nib of my pen capered nimbly away into a flourish, in a fashion to coax praise out of a pumpkin. What

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but courtesy on so bright a morning and with so smooth a pen? I was in the middle of the page, taking breath after a long and laudatory sentence, when, paff! through the window came a gust of air, labelled for the bare nerves. (If you have ever been in Boston, perhaps you have observed that an east wind, in that city of blue noses in June, gives you a sensation like being suddenly deprived of your skin.) In a shudder of disgust I bore down upon the dot of an i, and my pen, like an "over-tried friend," gave way under the pressure. With the wind in that same quarter, dexterity died. After vain efforts to mend my pen to its original daintiness, I amputated the nib to a broad working stump, and aimed it doggedly at the beginning of a new paragraph. But my wits had gone about with the grasshopper on the church steeple. Nothing would trickle from that stumpy quill, either graceful or gracious; and having looked through the book, but with a view to find matter to praise, I was obliged to run it over anew to forage for the east wind. "Hence the milk in the cocoa-nut," as the showman says of the monkey's stealing children. I wrote a savage review, which the reader was expected to believe contained the opinions of the reviewer!! Oh, Jupiter!

All this is to apologize, not for my own letter, which I intend to be a pattern of good humor, but for a passage in your last, (if written upon a hard egg you should have mentioned it in the margin,) in which, apropos of my jaunt to the Chemung, you accuse me of being glad to get away from my hermitage. I could write you a sermon now on the nature of content, but you would say

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the very text is apochryphal. My "lastly," however, would go to prove that there is bigotry in retirement as in all things either good or pleasurable. The eye that never grows familiar with nature, needs freshening from all things else. A room, a chair, a musical instrument, a horse, a dog, the road you drive daily, and the well you drink from, are all more prized when left and returned to. The habit of turning back daily from a certain mile-stone, in your drive, makes that mile-stone, after a while, a prison wall. It is pleasant to pass it, though the road beyond be less beautiful. If I were once more "brave Master Shoe-tie, the great traveller," it would irk me, I dare say, to ride thirty miles in a rail-car drawn by one slow horse. Yet it is a pleasant "lark" now, to run down to Ithaca for a night, in this drowsy conveyance, though I exchange a cool cottage for a fly-nest, "lavendered linen" for abominable cotton, and the service of civil William for the "young lady that takes care of the chambers." I like the cobwebs swept out of my eyes. I like to know what reason I have to keep my temper among my household gods. I like to pay an extravagant bill for villanous entertainment abroad, and come back to escape ruin in the luxuries of home.

Doctor! were you ever a vagabond for years together? I know you have hung your hat on the South Pole, but you are one of those "friend of the family" men, who will travel from Dan to Beersheba, and be at no charges for lodging. You cannot understand, I think, the life from which I have escaped—the life of

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"mine ease in mine inn." Pleasant mockery! You have never had the hotel fever—never sickened of the copperplate human faces met exclusively in those homes of the homeless—never have gone distracted at the eternal "one piece of soap, and the last occupant's tooth-brush and cigar!" To be slighted any hour of the evening for a pair of slippers and a tin candlestick—to sleep and wake amid the din of animal wants, complaining and supplied—to hear no variety of human tone but the expression of these baser necessities—to be waited on either by fellows who would bring your coffin as unconcernedly as your breakfast, or by a woman who is rude, because insulted when kind—to lie always in strange beds—to go *home* to a house of strangers—to be weary without pity, sick without soothing, sad without sympathy—to sit at twilight by your lonely window, in some strange city, and, with a heart which a child's voice would dissolve in tenderness, to see door after door open and close upon fathers, brothers, friends, expected and welcomed by the beloved and the beloving—these are costly miseries against which I almost hourly weigh my cheaper happiness in a home! Yet this is the life pined after by the grown-up boy—the life called fascinating and mystified in romance—the life, dear Doctor, for which even yourself can fancy I am "imping my wing" anew! Oh, no! I have served seven years for this Rachel of contentment, and my heart is no Laban to put me off with a Leah.

"A!" Imagine this capital letter laid on its back, and pointed south by east, and you have a pretty fair

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diagram of the junction of the Susquehannah and the Chemung. The note of admiration describes a superb line of mountains at the back of the Chemung valley, and the quotation marks express the fine bluffs that overlook the meeting of the waters at Athens. The cross of the letter (say a line of four miles) defines a road from one river to the other, by which travellers up the Chemung save the distance to the point of the triangle, and the area between is a broad plain, just now as fine a spectacle of teeming harvest as you would find on the Genesee.

As the road touches the Chemung, you pass under the base of a round mountain, once shaped like a sugar-loaf, but now with a top, o' the fashion of a schoolboy's hat punched in to drink from; the floor-worn edge of the felt answering to a fortification around the rim of the hill, built by —— I should be obliged if you would tell me whom. They call it Spanish Hill, and the fortifications were old at the time of the passing through of Sullivan's army. It is as pretty a fort as my uncle Toby could have seen in Flanders, and was, doubtless, occupied by gentlemen soldiers long before the May-flower moored off the rock of Plymouth. The tradition runs that an Indian chief once ascended it to look for Spanish gold; but on reaching the top, was enveloped in clouds and thunder, and returned with a solemn command from the spirit of the mountain that no Indian should ever set foot on it again. An old lady, who lives in the neighborhood, (famous for killing two Tories with a stone in her stocking,) declares that the dread of this moun-

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tain is universal among the tribes, and that nothing would induce a red man to ascend it. This looks as if the sachem had found what he went after; and it is a modern fact, I understand, that a man hired to plough on the hill-side, suddenly left his employer and purchased a large farm, by nobody knows what windfall of fortune. Half this mountain belongs to a gentleman who is building a country-seat on an exquisite site between it and the river, and to the kindness of his son and daughter, who accompanied us in our ascent, we are indebted for a most pleasant hour, and what information I have given you.

I will slip in here a memorandum for any invalid, town-weary person, or new-married couple, to whom you may have occasion, in your practice, to recommend change of air. The house formerly occupied by this gentleman, a roomy mansion, in a commanding and beautiful situation, is now open as an inn, and I know nowhere a retreat so private and desirable. It is near both the Susquehannah and the Chemung, the hills laced with trout-streams, four miles from Athens, and half way between Owego and Elmira. The scenery all about is delicious, and the house well kept at country charges. My cottage is some sixteen miles off; and if you give any of your patients a letter to me, I will drive up and see them, with a posy and a pot of jelly. You will understand that they must be people who do not "add perfume to the violet." In my way—simple.

I can in no way give you an idea of the beauty of the Chemung river from Brigham's Inn to Elmira. We en-

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tered immediately upon the *Narrows*—a spot where the river follows into a curve of the mountain, like an inlaying of silver around the bottom of an emerald cup—the brightest water, the richest foliage—and a landscape of meadow between the horns of the crescent that would be like the finest park scenery in England, if the boldness of the horizon did not mix with it a resemblance to Switzerland.

We reached Elmira at sunset. What shall I say of it? From a distance, its situation is most beautiful. It lies (since we have begun upon the alphabet) in the tail of a magnificent L, formed by the bright winding of the river. Perhaps the surveyor, instead of deriving its name from his sweetheart, called it *L. mirabile*—corrupted to vulgar comprehension, *Elmira*. If he did not, he might, and I will lend him the etymology.

The town is built against a long island, covered with soft green-sward, and sprinkled with noble trees; a promenade of unequalled beauty and convenience, *but* that all which a village can muster of unsightliness has chosen the face of the river-bank "to turn its lining to the sun." Fie on you, Elmira! I intend to get up a memorial to Congress, praying that the banks of rivers in all towns settled henceforth, shall be government property, to be reserved and planted for public grounds. It was the design of William Penn at Philadelphia, and think what a binding it would have been to his chequer-board. Fancy a pier and promenade along the Hudson at New-York! Imagine it a feature of every town in this land of glorious rivers!

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There is a singular hotel at Elmira, (big as a state-house, and be-turreted and be-columned according to the most approved system of impossible rent and charges to make it possible,) in the plan of which, curious enough, the *chambers* were entirely forgotten. The house is all parlors and closets! We were shown into superb drawing-rooms, (one for each party,) with pier-glasses, windows to the floor, expensive furniture, and a most polite landlord; and began to think the civilization for which we had been looking east, had stepped over our heads and gone on to the Pacific. Excellent supper and civil service. At dark, two very taper mutton candles set on the superb marble-table—but that was but a trifling incongruity. After a call from a pleasant friend or two, and a walk, we made an early request to be shown to our bed-rooms. The "young lady that sometimes uses a broom for exercise," opened a closet-door with a look of *la voila!* and left us, speechless with astonishment. There was a bed of the dimensions of a saint's niche, but no window by which, if stifled, the soul could escape to its destination. Yet here we were, evidently abandoned on a hot night in July, with a door to shut if we thought it prudent, and a candle-wick like an ignited poodle-dog to assist in the process of suffocation! I hesitated about calling up the landlord, for, as I said before, he was a most polite and friendly person; and if we were to give up the ghost in that little room, it was evidently in the ordinary arrangements of the house. "Why not sleep in the parlor?" you will have said. So we did. But, like the king of Spain, who was partly

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roasted because nobody came to move back the fire, this obvious remedy did not at the instant occur to me. The pier-glass and other splendors of course did duty as bedroom furniture, and, I may say, we slept sumptuously. Our friends in the opposite parlor did as we did, but took the moving of the bed to be, *tout bonnement*, what the landlord expected. I do not think so, yet I was well pleased with him and his entertainment, and shall stop at the "Eagle" incontinently—if I can choose my apartment. I am not sure but, in other parts of the house, the blood-thirsty architect has constructed some of these smothering places without parlors. God help the unwary traveller!

Talking of home, (we were at home to dinner the next day,) I wonder whether it is true that adverse fortunes have thrown Mrs. Sigourney's beautiful home into the market. It is offered for sale, and the newspapers say as much. If so, it is pity, indeed. I was there once; and to leave so delicious a spot must, I think, breed a heart-ache. In general, unless the reverse is extreme, compassion is thrown away on those who leave a large house to be comfortable in a small one; but she is a poetess, and a most true and sweet one, and has a property in that house, and in all its trees and flowers, which can neither be bought nor sold. It is robbery to sell it for its apparent value. You can understand, for "your spirit is touched to these fine issues," how a tree that the eye of genius has rested on while the mind was at work among its bright fancies, becomes the cradle and home of these fancies. The brain seems driven out

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of its workshop if you cut it down. So with walks. So with streams. So with the modifications of natural beauty seen thence habitually—sunrise, sunsetting, moonlight. In peculiar places, these daily glories take peculiar effects, and in that guise genius becomes accustomed to recognize and love them most. Who can buy this at auction! Who can weave this golden mesh in another tree—give the same voices to another stream—the same sunset to other hills? This fairy property, invisible as it is, is acquired slowly. Habit, long association, the connexion with many precious thoughts, (the more precious the farther between,) make it precious. To sell such a spot for its wood and brick, is to value Tom Moore for what he will weigh—Daniel Webster for his superficies. Then there *will be* a time (I trust it is far off) when the property will treble even in saleable value. The bee and the poet must be killed before their honey is tasted. For how much more would Abbotsford sell now than in the lifetime of Scott? For what could you buy Ferney—Burns's cottage—Shakspeare's house at Stratford? I have not the honor of a personal acquaintance with Mrs. Sigourney, and cannot judge with what philosophy she may sustain this reverse. But, bear it well or ill, there can be no doubt it falls heavily; and it is one of those instances, I think, where public feeling should be called on to interpose. But in what shape? I have always admired the generosity and readiness with which actors play for the benefit of a decayed "brother of the sock." Let American authors contribute to make up a volume, and let the peo-

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ple of Hartford, who live in the light of this bright spirit, head the subscription with ten thousand copies. You live among literary people, dear Doctor, and your "smile becomes you better than any man's in all Phrygia." You can set it afloat if you will. My name is among the W.'s, but I will be ready in my small turn.

"Now God b'wi'you, good Sir Topas!" for on this sheet there is no more room, and I owe you but one. Correspondence, like thistles, "is not blown away till it hath gotten too high a top." Adieu.

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LETTER VIII.

My Dear Doctor.—What can keep you in town during this insufferable hot solstice? I cannot fancy, unless you shrink from a *warm* welcome in the country. It is too hot for enthusiasm, and I have sent the cart to the hay-field, and crept under the bridge in my slippers, as if I had found a day to be idle, though I promised myself to see the harvest home, without missing sheaf or winrow. Yet it must be cooler here than where you are, for I see accounts of drought on the sea-board, while with us every hot noon has bred its thunder-shower, and the corn on the dry hill-sides is the only crop not kept back by the moisture. Still, the waters are low, and the brook at my feet has depleted to a slender vein, scarce stouter than the pulse that flutters under your thumb in the slightest wrist in your practice. My lobster is missing—probably gone to "the springs." My swallowlets too, who have, "as it were, eat paper and drunk ink," have flitted since yesterday, like illiterate gipseys, leaving no note of their departure. "Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba." The old swallows circle about as if they expected them again. Heaven

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send they are not in some crammed pocket in that red school-house, unwilling listeners to the vexed alphabet, or, perhaps, squeezed to death in the varlet's perplexity at crooked S.

I have blotted that last sentence like a schoolboy, but, between the beginning and the end of it, I have lent a neighbor my side-hill plough, besides answering, by the way, rather an embarrassing question. My catechiser lives above me on the *drink*, (his name for the river,) and is one of those small farmers, common here, who live without seeing money from one year's end to the other. He never buys, he *trades*. He takes a bag of wheat, or a fleece, to the village for salt fish and molasses, pays his doctor in corn or honey, and "changes work" with the blacksmith, the saddler, and the shoemaker. He is a shrewd man withal, likes to talk, and speaks Yankee of the most Bœotian fetch and purity. Imagine a disjointed-looking Enceladus, in a homespun, sunflower-colored coat, and small yellow eyes, expressive of nothing but the merest curiosity, looking down on me by throwing himself over the railing like a beggar's wallet of broken meats.

"Good morning, Mr. Willis*y*!"

From hearing my name first used in the possessive case, probably, (Willis's farm, or cow,) he regularly throws me in that last syllable.

"Ah! good morning!" (Looking up at the interruption, I made that unsightly blot which you have just excused.)

"You aint got no side-hill plough?"

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"Yes, I have, and I'll lend it to you with pleasure".

"Wal! you're darn'd quick. I warnt a go'n' to ask you quite yet. Writin' to your folks at hum?"

"No!"

"Making out a lease!"

"No!"

"How you do spin it off! You haint always work'd on a farm, have ye?"

It is a peculiarity (a redeeming peculiarity, I think,) of the Yankees, that though their questions are rude, they are never surprised if you do not answer them. I did not feel that the thermometer warranted me in going into the history of my life to my overhanging neighbor, and I busied myself in crossing my t's and dotting my i's very industriously. He had a maggot in his brain, however, and must e'en be delivered of it. He pulled off a splinter or two from under the bridge with his long arms, and during the silence William came to me with a message, which he achieved with his English under-tone of respect.

"Had to lick that boy some, to make him so darn'd civil, hadn't ye?"

"You have a son about his age, I think."

"Yes; but I guess he couldn't be scared to talk that way. What's the critter 'fear'd on?"

No answer.

"You haint been a minister, have ye?"

"No!"

"Wal! they talk a heap about your place. *I say, Mr. Willisy, you aint nothing particular, be ye?*"

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You should have seen, dear Doctor, the look of eager and puzzled innocence with which this rather difficult question was delivered. Something or other had evidently stimulated my good neighbor's curiosity, but whether I had been blown up in a steamboat, or had fatted a prize pig, or what was my claim to the *digito monstrari*, it was more than half his errand to discover. I have put down our conversation, I believe, with the accuracy of a short-hand writer. Now, is not this a delicious world in which, out of a museum, neither stuffed nor muzzled, you may find such an arcadian? What a treasure he would be to those ancient mariners of polite life, who exist but to tell you their little peculiarities!

I have long thought, dear Doctor, and this reminds me of it, that there were two necessities of society unfitted with a vocation. (If you know of any middle-aged gentleman out of employment, I have no objection to your reserving the suggestion for a private charity, but otherwise, I would communicate it to the world as a new light.) The first is a luxury which no hotel should be without, no neighborhood, no thoroughfare, no editor's closet. I mean a professed, salaried, stationary, and confidential *listener*. Fancy the comfort of such a thing. There should be a well-dressed, silent gentleman, for instance, pacing habitually the long corridor of the Astor, with a single button on his coat of the size of a door-handle. You enter in a violent hurry, or with a mind tenanted to suit yourself, and some *fainéant* babbler, weary of his emptiness, must needs take you aside, and rob you of two mortal hours, more or less, while he

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tells you his tale of nothing. If "a penny saved is a penny got," what a value it would add to life to be able to transfer this leech of precious time, by laying his hand politely on the large button of the listener! "Finish your story to this gentleman!" quoth you. Then, again, there is your unhappy man in hotels, newly arrived, without an acquaintance save the crisp and abbreviating bar-keeper, who wanders up and down, silent-sick, and more solitary in the crowd about him than the hermit on the lone column of the temple of Jupiter. What a mercy to such a sufferer to be able to step to the bar, and order a listener. Or to send for him with a bottle of wine when dining *alone*, (most particularly alone,) at a table of two hundred! Or to ring for him in number four hundred and ninety-three, of a rainy Sunday, with punch and cigars! I am deceived in Stetson of the Astor if he is not philosopher enough to see the value of this suggestion. "Baths in the house, and a respectable listener if desired," would be an attractive advertisement, let me promise you!

The other vocation to which I referred, would be that of a sort of ambulant dictionary, used mostly at evening parties. It should be a gentleman not distinguishable from the common animated wall-flower, except by some conventional sign, as a bit of blue riband in his button-hole. His qualifications should be to know all persons moving in the circle, and something about them—to be up, in short, to the town gossip—what Miss Thing's expectations are—who "my friend" is with the dyed mustache—and which of the stout ladies on the sofa are

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the forecast shadows of coming balls—or the like desirablenesses. There are a thousand invisible cobwebs threaded through society which the stranger is apt to cross *à travers*—committing his enthusiasm, for instance, to the deaf ears of a *fiancée;* or, from ignorance, losing opportunities of knowing the clever, the witty, and the famous—all of whom look, at a first glance, very much like other people. The gentleman with the blue riband, you see, would remedy all this. You might make for him after you bow to the lady of the house, and in ten minutes put yourself *au courant* of the entire field. You might apply to him (if you had been absent to Santa Fe or the Pyramids) for the last new shibboleth—the town rage—the name of the new play or poem—the form and color of the freshest change in the kaleidoscope of society. It is not uncommon for sensible people to retire, and "sweep and garnish" their self-respect in a month's seclusion. It is some time before they become *au fait* again of what it is necessary to know of the follies of the hour. The graceful yet bitter wit, the unoffending yet pointed rally, the confidence which colors all defeats like successes, are delicate weapons, the dexterity at which depends much on familiarity with the ground. What an advent to the diffident and the embarrassed would be such a profession! How many persons of wit and spirit there are in society blank for lack of confidence, who, with such a friend in the corner, would come out like magic ink to the fire! "*Ma hardiesse,* (says the aspiring rocket,) *vient de mon ardeur!*" But the device would lose its point did it take a jack-o'-lan-

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tern for a star. Mention these little hints to your cleverest female friend, dear Doctor. It takes a woman to introduce an innovation.

Since I wrote to you, I have been adopted by perhaps the most abominable cur you will see in your travels. I mention it to ward off the first impression—for a dog gives a character to a house; and I would not willingly have a friend light on such a monster in my premises without some preparation. His first apparition was upon a small floss carpet at the foot of an ottoman, the most luxurious spot in the house, of which he had taken possession with a quiet impudence that perfectly succeeded. A long, short-legged cur, of the color of spoiled mustard, with most base tail and erect ears—villanous in all his marks. Rather a dandy gentleman, from New-York, was calling on us when he was discovered, and presuming the dog to be his, we forbore remark; and, assured by this chance indulgence, he stretched himself to sleep. The indignant outcry with which the gentleman disclaimed all knowledge of him, disturbed his slumber; and, not to leave us longer in doubt, he walked confidently across the room, and seated himself between my feet with a canine freedom I had never seen exhibited except upon most familiar acquaintance. I saw clearly that our visitor looked upon *my* disclaimer as a "fetch." It would have been perilling my credit for veracity to deny the dog. So no more was said about him, and since that hour he has kept himself cool in my shadow. I have tried to make him over to the kitchen, but he will neither feed nor stay with them. I

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can neither outrun him on horseback, nor lose him by crossing ferries. Very much to the discredit of my taste, I am now never seen without this abominable follower—and there is no help for it, unless I kill him, which, since he loves me, would be worse than shooting the albatross; besides, I have at least a drachm (three scruples) of Pythagoreanism in me, and "fear to kill woodcock, lest I dispossess the soul of my grandam." I shall look to the papers to see what friend I have lost in Italy, or the East. I can think of some who would come to me thus.

Adieu, dear Doctor. Send me a good name for my cur—for since he will have me, why I must needs be his, and he shall be graced with an appellation. I think his style of politics might be worth something in love. If I were the lady, it would make a fair beginning. But I will waste no more ink upon you.

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LETTER IX.

My Dear Doctor—As they say an oyster should be pleased with his apotheosis in a certain sauce, I was entertained with the cleverness of your letter though you made minced-meat of my trout-fishing. Under correction, however, I still cover the barb of my "fly," and so I must do till I can hook my trout if he but graze the bait with his whisker. You are an alumnus of the gentle science, in which I am but a neophyte, and your fine rules pre-suppose the dexterity of a practised angler. Now a trout (I have observed in my small way) will jump *once* at your naked fly, but if he escape, he will have no more on't, unless there is a cross of the dace in him. As it is a fish that follows his nose, however, the smell of the worm will bring him to the lure again, and if your awkwardness give him time, he will stick to it till he has cleaned the hook. *Probatum est.*

You may say this is unscientific, but, if I am to breakfast from the contents of my creel, I must be left with my worm and my ignorance.

Besides—hang rules! No two streams are alike—no two men (who are not fools) fish alike. Walton and Wilson would find some new "wrinkle" if they were to

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try these wild waters; and, to generalize the matter, I have, out of mathematics, a distrust of rules, descriptions, manuals, etc., amounting to a *'phobia*. Experience was always new to me. I do not seem to myself ever to have seen the Rome I once read of. The Venice I know is not the Venice of story nor of travellers' books. There are two Londons in my mind—one where I saw whole shelves of my library walking about in coats and petticoats, and another where there was nothing visible through the fog but fat men with tankards of porter—one memory of it all glittering with lighted rooms, bright and kind faces, men all manly, and women all womanly, and another memory (got from books) where every man was surly, and dressed in a buff waistcoat, and every woman a giantess, in riding-hat and boots.

It is delightful to think how *new* everything is, spite of description. Never believe, dear Doctor, that there is an old world. There is no such place, on my honor! You will find England, France, Italy, and the East, after all you have read and heard, as altogether new as if they were created by your eye, and were never sung, painted, nor be-written—you will indeed. Why, to be sure! What were the world else? A pawnbroker's closet, where every traveller had left his clothes for you to wear after him! No! no! Thanks to Providence, all things are new! Pen and ink cannot take the gloss off your eyes, nor can any man look through them as you do. I do not believe the simplest matter—sunshine or verdure—has exactly the same look to any two people in the world. How much less a human face—a

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landscape—a broad kingdom? Travellers are very pleasant people. They tell you what picture was produced in their brain by the things they saw; but if they forestalled novelty by that, I would as soon read them as beseech a thief to steal my dinner. *How it looks to one pair of eyes* would be a good reminder pencilled on the margin of many a volume.

I have run my ploughshare, in this furrow, upon a root of philosophy, which has cured heart-aches for me ere now. I struck upon it almost accidentally, while administering consolation, years since, to a sensitive friend, whose muse had been consigned, alive and kicking, to the tomb, by a blundering *undertaker* of criticism. I read the review, and wrote on it with a pencil, "So thinks one man in fifteen millions;" and, to my surprise, up swore my dejected friend, like Master Barnardine, that he would "consent to die that day, for no man's persuasion." Since that I have made a practice of *counting the enemy;* and trust me, dear Doctor, it is sometimes worth while not to run away without this little preliminary. A friend, for instance, with a most boding solemnity, takes you aside, and pulls from his pocket a newspaper containing a paragraph that is aimed at your book, your morals, perhaps your looks and manners.—You catch the alarm from your friend's face, and fancy it is the voice of public opinion, and your fate is fixed. Your book *is* detestable, your character *is* gone. Your manners and features *are* the object of universal disapprobation. Stay! *count the enemy!* Was it decided by a convention? No! By a caucus? No! By a vote

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on the deck of a steamboat? No! By a group at the corner of the street, by a club, by a dinner-party? No! By whom then? One small gentleman, sitting in a dingy corner of a printing-office, who puts his quill through your reputation as the entomologist slides a pin through a beetle—in the way of his vocation. No particular malice to *you*. He wanted a specimen of the *genus* poet, and you were the first caught. If there is no *head* to the pin, (as there often is none,) the best way is to do as the beetle does—pretend to be killed till he forgets you, and then slip off without a buzz.

The only part of calumny that I ever found troublesome was my friends' insisting on my being unhappy about it. I dare say you have read the story of the German criminal, whose last request, that his head might be struck off while he stood engaged in conversation, was humanely granted by the provost. The executioner was an adroit headsman, and, watching his opportunity, he crept behind his victim while he was observing the flight of a bird, and sliced off his bulb without even discomposing his gaze. It was suggested to the sufferer presently that he was decapitated, but he thought not. Upon which one of his friends stepped up, and, *begging he would take the pains to stir himself a little*, his head fell to the ground. If the story be not true, the moral is. In the many times I have been put to death by criticism, I have never felt incommoded, till some kind friend insisted upon it, and now that I can stand on a potato-hill in a circle of twice the diameter of a rifle-shot, and warn off all trespassers, I intend to defy sym-

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pathy, and carry my top as long as it will stay on—behead me as often as you like, beyond my periphery.

Still, though

> "The eagle suffers little birds to sing,
> And is not careful what they mean thereby,"

it is very pleasant now and then to pounce upon a bigger bird screaming in the same chorus. Nothing impairs the dignity of an author's reputation like a newspaper wrangle, yet one bold literary vulture struck down promptly and successfully, serves as good a purpose as the hawk nailed to the barn-door. But I do not live in the country to be pestered with resentments. I do not well know how the thoughts of them came under the bridge. I'll have a fence that shall keep out such stray cattle, or there are no posts and rails in philosophy.

There is a little mental phenomenon, dear Doctor, which has happened to me of late so frequently, that I must ask you if you are subject to it, in the hope that your singular talent for analysis will give me the "*pourquoy*." I mean a sudden novelty in the impression of very familiar objects, enjoyments, etc. For example, did it ever strike you all at once that a tree was a very magnificent production? After looking at lakes and rivers for thirty years, (more or less,) have you ever, some fine morning, caught sight of a very familiar stream, and found yourself impressed with its new and singular beauty? I do not know that the miracle extends to human faces, at least in the same degree. I am *sure* that my old coat is not rejuvenescent. But it is true that from possess-

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ing the *nil admirari* becoming to a "picked man of countries," (acquired with some pains, I may say,) I now catch myself smiling with pleasure to think the river will not all run by, that there will be another sunset to-morrow, that my grain will ripen and nod when it is ripe, and such like every-day marvels. Have we scales that drop off our eyes at a "certain age?" Do our senses renew as well as our bodies, only more capriciously? Have we a chrysalis state, here below, like that *parvenu* gentleman, the butterfly? Still more interesting query—does this delicious novelty attach, later in life, or ever, to objects of affection—compensating for the ravages in the form, the dulness of the senses, loss of grace, temper, and all outward loveliness? I should like to get you over a flagon of tokay on that subject.

There is a curious fact, I have learned for the first time in this wild country, and it may be new to you, that as the forest is cleared, new springs rise to the surface of the ground, as if at the touch of the sunshine. The settler knows that water as well as herbage will start to the light, and as his axe lets it in upon the black bosom of the wilderness, his cattle find both pasture and drink, where, before, there had never been either well-head or verdure. You have yourself been, in your day, dear Doctor, "a warped slip of wilderness," and will see at once that there lies in this ordinance of nature a beautiful analogy to certain moral changes that come in upon the heels of more cultivated and thoughtful manhood. Of the springs that start up in the footsteps of

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thought and culture, the sources are like those of forest springs, unsuspected till they flow. There is no divining rod, whose dip shall tell us at twenty what we shall most relish at thirty. We do not think that with experience we shall have grown simple, that things we slight and overlook will have become marvels, that our advancement in worth will owe more to the cutting away of overgrowth in tastes than to their acquisition or nurture.

I should have thought this change in myself scarce worth so much blotting of good paper, but for its bearing on a question that has hitherto given me no little anxiety. The rivers flow on to the sea, increasing in strength and glory to the last, but we have our pride and fulness in youth, and dwindle and fall away toward the grave. How I was to grow dull to the ambitions and excitements which constituted my whole existence—be content to lag and fall behind and forego emulation in all possible pursuits—in short, how I was to grow old contentedly and gracefully, has been to me a somewhat painful puzzle. With what should I be pleased? How should I fill the vacant halls from which had fled merriment and fancy, and hope and desire?

You can scarce understand, dear Doctor, with what pleasure I find this new spring in my path—the content with which I admit the conviction, that, without effort or self-denial, the mind may slake its thirst, and the heart be satisfied with but the waste of what lies so near us. I have all my life seen men grow old, tranquilly and content, but I did not think it possible that *I* should. I

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took pleasure only in that which required young blood to follow, and I felt that, to look backward for enjoyment, would be at best but a difficult resignation.

Now let it be no prejudice to the sincerity of my philosophy, if, as a corollary, I beg you to take a farm on the Susquehannah, and let us grow old in company. I should think Fate kinder than she passes for, if I could draw you, and one or two others whom we know and "love with knowledge," to cluster about this—certainly one of the loveliest spots in nature, and, while the river glides by unchangingly, shape ourselves to our changes with a helping sympathy. Think of it, dear Doctor! Meantime I employ myself in my rides, selecting situations on the river banks which I think would be to yours and our friends' liking; and in the autumn, when it is time to transplant, I intend to suggest to the owners where trees might be wanted in case they ever sold, so that you will not lose even a season in your shrubbery, though you delay your decision. Why should we not renew Arcady? God bless you.

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LETTER X.

You may congratulate me on the safe getting in of my harvest, dear Doctor; for I have escaped, as you may say, in a parenthesis. Two of the most destructive hail-storms remembered in this part of the country have prostrated the crops of my neighbors, above and below —leaving not a blade of corn, nor an unbroken window; yet there goes my last load of grain into the barn, well-ripened, and cut standing and fair.

> "Some bright little cherub, that sits up aloft,
> Keeps watch for the soul of poor Peter."

I confess I should have fretted at the loss of my first-lings more than for a much greater disaster in another shape. I have expended curiosity, watching, and fresh interest upon my uplands, besides plaster and my own labor; and the getting back five hundred bushels for five or ten, has been to me, through all its beautiful changes from April till now, a wonder to be enjoyed like a play. To have lost the *denouement* by a hail-storm, would be like a play with the fifth act omitted, or a novel with the

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last leaf torn out. Now, if no stray spark set fire to my barn, I can pick you out the whitest of a thousand sheaves, thrash them with the first frost, and send you a barrel of Glenmary flour, which shall be not only very excellent bread, but should have also a flavor of wonder, admiration—all the feelings, in short, with which I have watched it, from seed-time to harvest. Yet there is many a dull dog will eat of it, and remark no taste of *me!* And so there are men who will read a friend's book as if it were a stranger's—but we are not of those. If we love the man, whether we eat a potato of his raising, or read a verse of his inditing, there is in it a sweetness which has descended from his heart—by quill or hoe-handle. I scorn impartiality. If it be a virtue, Death and Posterity may monopolize it for me.

I was interrupted a moment since by a neighbor, who, though innocent of reading and writing, has a coinage of phraseology, which would have told in authorship. A stray mare had broken into his peas, and he came to me to write an advertisement for the court-house door. After requesting the owner "to pay charges and take her away," in good round characters, I recommended to my friend, who was a good deal vexed at the trespass, to take a day's work out of her.

"Why, I aint no job on the mounting," said he, folding up the paper very carefully. "It's a *side-hill* critter! Two off legs so lame, she can't stand even."

It was certainly a new idea, that a horse with two spavins on a side, might be used with advantage on a hill-farm. While I was jotting it down for your

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benefit, my neighbor had emerged from under the bridge, and was climbing the railing over my head.

"What will you do if he won't pay damages?" I cried out.

"*Put the types on to him!*" he answered; and, jumping into the road, strided away to post up his advertisement.

I presume, that "to put the types on to" a man, is to send the constable to him with a printed warrant; but it is a good phrase.

The hot weather of the last week has nearly dried up the brook, and, forgetting to water my young trees in the hurry of harvesting, a few of them have hung out the quarantine yellow at the top, and, I fear, will scarce stand it till autumn. Not to have all my hopes in one venture, and that a frail one, I have set about converting a magnificent piece of wild jungle into an academical grove—an occupation that makes one feel more like a viceroy than a farmer. Let me interest you in this metempsychosis; for, if we are to grow old together, as I proposed to you in my last, this grove will lend its shade to many a slippered noontide, and echo, we will hope, the philosophy of an old age, wise and cheerful. Aptly for my design, the shape of the grove is that of the Greek Ω—the river very nearly encircling it; and here, if I live, will I pass the Omega of my life; and, if you will come to the christening, dear Doctor, so shall the grove be named, in solemn ceremony—*The Omega.*

How this nobly-wooded and water-clasped little peninsula has been suffered to run to waste, I know not. It contains some half-score acres of rich interval; and, to

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the neglect of previous occupants of the farm, I probably owe its gigantic trees, as well as its weedy undergrowth, and tangled vines. Time out of mind (five years, in this country) it has been a harbor for woodcocks, wood-ducks, minks, wild-bees, humming-birds, and cranes—(two of the latter still keeping possession) —and its labyrinth of tall weeds, interlaced with the low branches of the trees, was seldom penetrated, except once or twice a year by the sportsman, and as often by the Owaga in its freshet. Scarce suspecting the size of the trees within, whose trunks were entirely concealed, I have looked upon its towering mass of verdure but as a superb emerald wall, shutting the meadows in on the east—and, though within a lance-shot of my cottage, have neglected it, like my predecessors, for more manageable ground.

I have enjoyed very much the planting of young wood, and the anticipation of its shade and splendor in heaven's slow, but good time. It was a pleasure of Hope; and, to men of leisure and sylvan taste in England, it has been—literature bears witness—a pursuit full of dignity and happiness. But the redemption of a venerable grove from the wilderness, is an enjoyment of another measure. It is a kind of playing of King Lear backward—discovering the old monarch in his abandonment, and sweeping off his unnatural offspring, to bring back the sunshine to his old age, and give him room, with his knights, in his own domain. You know how trees that grow wild near water, in this country, put out foliage upon the trunk as well as the branches, covering

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it, like ivy, to the roots. It is a beautiful caprice of Nature; but the grandeur of the dark and massive stem is entirely lost—and I have been as much surprised at the giant bodies we have developed, stripping off this unfitting drapery, as Richard at the thewes and sinews of the uncowled friar of Copmanhurst.

You cannot fancy, if you have never exercised this grave authority, how many difficulties of judgment arise, and how often a jury is wanted to share the responsibility of the irretrievable axe. I am slow to condemn; and the death-blow to a living tree, however necessary, makes my blood start, and my judgment half repent. There are, to-day, several under reprieve—one of them a beautiful linden, which I can see from my seat under the bridge, nodding just now to the wind, as careless of its doom as if it were sure its bright foliage would flaunt out the summer. In itself it is well worth the sparing and cherishing, for it is full of life and youth—and, could I transplant it to another spot, it would be invaluable. But, though full grown and spreading, it stands among giants, whose branches meet above it at twice its height; and, while it contributes nothing to the shade, its smaller trunk looks a Lilliputian in Brobdignag, out of keeping and proportion. So I think it must come down—and, with it, a dozen in the same catogery—condemned, like many a wight who was well enough in his place, for being found in too good company.

There is a superstition about the linden, by the way, to which the peculiarity in its foliage may easily have given rise. You have remarked, of course, that from

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the centre of the leaf starts a slender stem, which bears the linden-flower. Our Saviour is said, by those who believe in the superstition, to have been crucified upon this tree, which has ever since borne the flowering type of the nails driven into it through his palms.

Another, whose doom is suspended, is a ragged sycamore, whose decayed branches are festooned to the highest top by a wild grape-vine, of the most superb fruitfulness and luxuriance. No wife ever pleaded for a condemned husband with more eloquence than these delicate tendrils to me, for the rude tree with whose destiny they are united. I wish you were here, dear Doctor, to say *spare it*, or *cut it down*. In itself, like the linden, it is a splendid creature; but, alas! it spoils a long avenue of stately trees opening toward my cottage porch, and I fear policy must outweigh pity. I shall let it stand over Sunday, and fortify myself with an opinion.

Did you ever try your hand, dear Doctor, at this forest-sculpture? It sounds easy enough to trim out a wood, and so it is, if the object be merely to produce butter-nuts, or shade grazing cattle. But to thin, and trim, and cut down, judiciously, changing a "wild and warped slip of wilderness" into a chaste and studious grove, is not done without much study of the spot, let alone a taste for the sylvan. There are all the many effects of the day's light to be observed, how morning throws her shadows, and what protection there is from noon, and where is flung open an aisle to let in the welcome radiance of sunset. There is a view of water

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to be let through, perhaps, at the expense of trees otherwise ornamental, or an object to hide by shrubbery which is in the way of an avenue. I have lived here as long as this year's grasshoppers, and am constantly finding out something which should have a bearing on the disposition of grounds or the *sculpture* (permit me the word) of my wood and forest. I am sorry to finish "the Omega" without your counsel and taste; but there is a wood on the hill which I will keep, like a cold pie, till you come to us, and we will shoulder our axes and carve it into likelihood together.

And now here comes my Yankee axe (not curtal) which I sent to be ground when I sat down to scrawl you this epistle. As you owe the letter purely to its *dulness*, (and mine,) I must away to a half-felled tree, which I deserted in its extremity. If there were truth in Ovid, what a butcher I were! Yet there is a groan when a tree falls, which sometimes seems to me more than the sundering of splinters. Adieu, dear Doctor, and believe that

> "Whate'er the ocean pales or sky inclips,
> Is thine,"

if I can give it you by wishing.

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LETTER XI.

The box of Rhenish is no substitute for yourself, dear Doctor, but it was most welcome—partly, perhaps, for the qualities it has in common with the gentleman who should have come in the place of it. The one bottle that has fulfilled its destiny, was worthy to have been sunned on the Rhine and drank on the Susquehannah, and I will never believe that any thing can come from you that will not improve upon acquaintance. So I shall treasure the remainder for bright hours. I should have thought it superior even to the Tokay I tasted at Vienna, if other experiments had not apprized me that country life sharpens the universal relish. I think that even the delicacy of the palate is affected by the confused sensations, the turmoil, the vexations of life in town. You will say you have your quiet chambers, where you are as little disturbed by the people around you as I by my grazing herds. But, by your leave, dear Doctor, the fountains of thought (upon which the senses are not a little dependent) will not clear and settle over-night, like a well. No—nor in a day, nor in two. You must *live* in the country to possess your bodily sensations as

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well as your mind, in tranquil control. It is only when you have forgotten streets and rumors and greetings—forgotten the whip of punctuality, and the hours of forced pleasure—only when you have cleansed your ears of the din of trades, the shuffle of feet, the racket of wheels, and coarse voices—only when your own voice, accustomed to contend against discords, falls, through the fragrant air of the country, into its natural modulations, in harmony with the low key upon which runs all the music of nature—only when that part of the world which partook not of the fall of Adam, has had time to affect you with its tranquillity—only then that the dregs of life sink out of sight, and while the soul sees through its depths, like the sun through untroubled water, the senses lose their fever and false energy, and play their part, and no more, in the day's expenditure of time and pulsation.

"Still harping on my daughter," you will say; and I will allow that I can scarce write a letter to you without shaping it to the end of attracting you to the Susquehannah. At least watch when you begin to grow old, and transplant yourself in time to take root, and then we may do as the trees do—defy the weather till we are separated. The oak itself, if it has grown up with its kindred thick about it, will break if left standing alone; and you and I, dear Doctor, have known the luxury of friends too well to bear the loneliness of an unsympathizing old age. Friends are not pebbles, lying in every path, but pearls gathered with pain, and rare as they are precious. We spend our youth and manhood in the

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search and proof of them, and when Death has taken his toll, we have too few to scatter—none to throw away. I, for one, will be a miser of mine. I feel the avarice of friendship growing on me with every year—tightening my hold and extending my grasp. Who at sixty is rich in friends? The richest are those who have drawn this wealth of angels around them, and spent care and thought on the treasuring. Come, my dear Doctor! I have chosen a spot on one of the loveliest of our bright rivers. Here is all that goes to make an Arcadia, except the friendly dwellers in its shade. I will choose your hill-side, and plant your grove, that the trees at least shall lose no time by your delay. Set a limit to your ambition, achieve it, and come away. It is terrible to grow old amid the jostle and disrespectful hurry of a crowd. The academy of the philosophers was out of Athens. You cannot fancy Socrates run against, in the market-place. Respect, which grows wild in the fields, requires watching and management in cities. Let us have an old man's Arcady—where we can slide our "slippered shoon" through groves of our own consecrating, and talk of the world as *without*—ourselves and gay philosophy within. I have strings pulling upon one or two in other lands, who, like ourselves, are not men to let Content walk unrecognized in their path. Slowly, but, I think, surely, they are drawing hitherward; and I have chosen places for *their* hearth-stones, too, and shall watch, as I do for you, that the woodman's axe cuts down no tree that would be regretted. If the cords draw well, and Death take but his tithe, my

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shady "Omega" will soon learn voices to which its echo will for long years be familiar, and the Owaga and Susquehannah will join waters within sight of an *old man's Utopia.*

"My sentiments better expressed" have come in the poet's corner of the Albion to-day—a paper, by the way, remarkable for its good selection of poetry. You will allow that these two verses, which are the closing ones of a piece called "The men of old," are above the common *run* of newspaper *fugitives:*

"A man's best things are nearest him,
Lie close about his feet;
It is the distant and the dim
That we are sick to greet:
For flowers that grow our hands beneath
We struggle and aspire,
Our hearts must die, except we breathe
The air of fresh desire.

"But, brothers, who up reason's hill
Advance with hopeful cheer,
O loiter not! those heights are chill,
As chill as they are clear.
And still restrain your haughty gaze—
The loftier that ye go,
Remembering distance leaves a haze
On all that lies below."

The man who wrote that, is hereby presented with the freedom of the Omega.

The first of September, and a frost! The farmers from the hills are mourning over their buck-wheat, but the river-mist saves all which lay low enough for its

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white wreath to cover; and mine, though sown on the hill-side, is at mist mark, and so escaped. Nature seems to intend that I shall take kindly to farming, and has spared my first crop even the usual calamities. I have lost but an acre of corn, I think, and that by the crows, who are privileged maurauders, welcome at least to build in the Omega, and take their tithe without rent-day or molestation. I like their noise, though discordant. It is the *minor* in the anthem of nature—making the gay song of the black-bird, and the merry chirp of the robin and oriel, more gay and cheerier. Then there is a sentiment about the raven *family*, and for Shakspeare's lines and his dear sake, I love them,

> "Some say the ravens foster forlorn children
> The while their own birds famish in their nests."

The very name of a good deed shall protect them. Who shall say that poetry is a vain art, or that poets are irresponsible for the moral of their verse! For Burns's sake, not ten days' since, I beat off my dog from the nest of a field-mouse, and forbade the mowers to cut the grass over her. She has had a poet for her friend, and her thatched roof is sacred. I should not like to hang about the neck of my soul all the evil that, by the last day, shall have had its seed in Byron's poem of the Corsair. It is truer of poetry than of most other matters, that

> "More water glideth by the mill
> Than wots the miller of."

But I am slipping into a sermon.

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Speaking of music, some one said here the other day, that the mingled hum of the sounds of nature, and the distant murmur of a city, produce, invariably, the note F in music. The voices of all tune, the blacksmith's anvil and the wandering organ, the church bells and the dustman's, the choir and the cart-wheel, the widow's cry and the bride's laugh, the prisoner's clanking chain and the schoolboy's noise at play—at the height of the church steeple *are one!* It is all "F" two hundred feet in air! The swallow can outsoar both our joys and miseries, and the lark—what are they in his chamber of the sun! If you have any unhappiness at the moment of receiving this letter, dear Doctor, try this bit of philosophy. It's all F where the bird flies! You have no wings to get there, you say, but your mind has more than the six of the cherubim, and in your mind lies the grief you would be rid of. As Cæsar says,

> "By all the gods the Romans bow before
> I here discard *my* sickness."

I'll be above F, and let troubles hang below. What a twopenny matter it makes of all our cares and vexations. I'll find a boy to climb to the top of a tall pine I have, and tie me up a white flag, which shall be above high-sorrow-mark henceforth. I will neither be elated or grieved without looking at it. It floats at "F," where it is *all one!* Why, it will be a castle in the air, indeed—impregnable to unrest. Why not, dear Doctor! Why should we not set up a reminder that our sorrows are only so deep—that the lees are but at the bottom,

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and there is good wine at the top—that there is an atmosphere but a little above us where our sorrows melt into our joys! No man need be unhappy who can see a grasshopper on a church vane.

It is surprising how mere a matter of animal spirits is the generation of many of our bluest devils; and it is more surprising that we have neither the memory to recall the trifles that have put them to the flight, nor the resolution to combat their approach. A man will be ready to hang himself in the morning for an annoyance that he has the best reason to know would scarce give him a thought at night. Even a dinner is a doughty devil-queller. How true is the apology of Menenius when Coriolanus had repelled his friend!

> "He had not dined.
> The veins unfilled, our blood is cold, and then
> We pout upon the morning: are unapt
> To give or to forgive; but when we have stuff'd
> These pipes, and these conveyances of our blood,
> With wine and feeding, we have suppler souls
> Than in our priest-like fasts. Therefore I'll watch him
> Till he be dieted to my request."

I have recovered my spirits ere now by a friend's asking me what was the matter. One seems to want but the suggestion, the presence of mind, the expressed wish, to be happy any day. My white flag shall serve me that good end! "Tut, man!" it shall say, "your grief is not grief where I am! Send your imagination this high to be whitewashed!"

Our weather to-day is a leaf out of October's book,

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soft, yet invigorating. The harvest moon seems to have forgotten her mantle last night, for there lies on the landscape a haze, that to be so delicate, should be born of moonlight. The boys report plenty of deer-tracks in the woods close by us, and the neighbors tell me they browse in troops on my buck-wheat by the light of the moon. Let them! I have neither trap nor gun on my premises, and Shakspeare shall be *their* sentinel too. At least, no Robin or Diggory shall shoot them without complaint of damage; though if you were here, dear Doctor, I should most likely borrow a gun, and lie down with you in the buck-wheat to see you bring down the fattest. And so do our partialities modify our benevolence. I fear I should compound for a visit by the slaughter of the whole herd. Perhaps you will come to shoot deer, and with that pleasant hope I will close my letter.

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LETTER XII.

I HAVE nearly had my breath taken away this morning, dear Doctor, by a grave assurance from a rail-road commissioner, that five years hence I should "devour the way" between this and New-York in seven hours. Close on the heels of this gentleman came an engineer of the canal, who promised me as trippingly, that in three years I should run in a packet-boat from my cottage to tide-water. This was intended, in both cases, I presume, to be very pleasant intelligence. With a little time, I dare say, I shall come to think it so. But I assure you at present, that, of all dwellers upon the canal route, myself, and the toads disentombed by the blasting of the rocks, are, perhaps, the most unpleasantly surprised—they, poor hermits, fancying themselves safe from the troubles of existence till dooms-day, and I as sure that my cottage was at a safe remove from the turmoil of city propinquity.

If I am compelled to choose a hearthstone again, (God knows whether Broadway will not reach bodily to this,) I will employ an engineer to find me a spot, if indeed there be one, which has nothing behind it or about

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it, or in its range, which could by any chance make it a thoroughfare. There is a charm to me in an *in*-navigable river, which brought me to the Susquehannah. I like the city sometimes, and I bless heaven for steamboats; but I love haunts where I neither see a steamboat nor expect the city. What is the Hudson but a great high-road? You may have your cottage, it is true, and live by the water-side in the shade, and be a hundred miles, more or less, from the city. But every half hour comes twanging through your trees, the clang of an untuneable bell informing you, whether you will or no, that seven hundred cits are seething past your solitude. You must be an abstracted student indeed if you do not look after the noisy intruder till she is lost to the eye. Then follow conjectures what news may be on board, what friends may be passing unknown, what celebrities or oddities, or wonders of beauty, may be mingling in the throng upon her decks; and by the time you remember again that you are in the country, there sounds another bell, and another discordant whiz, and so your mind is plucked away to city thoughts and associations, while your body sits alone and discontented amid the trees.

Now, for one, I like not this divorce. If I am to be happy, my imagination must keep my body company, and both must be in the country, or both in town. With all honor to Milton, who avers—

> "The mind is its own place, and *in itself*
> Can make a hell of heaven, a heaven of hell,"

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my mind, to make a heaven, requires the society of its material half. Though my pores take in a palpable pleasure from the soft air of morning, my imagination feeds twice as bountifully, foraging amid the sunshine and verdure with my two proper eyes; and in turn my fancy feeds more steadily when I breathe and feel what she is abroad in. Ask the traveller which were his unhappiest hours under foreign skies. If he is of my mind, he will say, they were those in which his thoughts (by letters or chance news) were driven irresistibly home, leaving his eyes blind and his ears deaf in the desert or the strange city. There are persons, I know, who make a pleasure of reverie, and, walking on the pavement, will be dreaming of fields, and in the fields think only of the distractions of town. But with me, absent thoughts, unless to be rid of disagreeable circumstances, are a disease. When in health, I am all together, what there is of me—soul and body, head and heart—and a steamboat that should daily cut the line of my horizon with human interest enough on board to take my thoughts with her when she disappeared, would, to my thinking, be a daily calamity. I thank God that the deep shades of the Omega lie between my cottage and the track of both canal and rail-road. I live in the lap of a semicircle of hills, and the diameter, I am pleased to know, is shorter than the curve. There is a green and wholesome half mile, thickly wooded, and mine own to keep so, between my threshold and the surveyor's line, and like the laird's Jock, I shall be "ay sticking in a tree."

Do not think, dear Doctor, that I am insensible to the

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grandeur of the great project to connect Lake Erie with the Hudson by rail-road, or that I do not feel a becoming interest in my country's prosperity. I would fain have a farm where my cattle and I can ruminate without fear of falling asleep on a rail-track, or slipping into a canal; but there is an imaginative and a bright side to these improvements, which I look on as often as on the other. What should prevent *steam-posting*, for example—not in confined and cramped carriages, suited to the strength of a pair of horses, but in airy and commodious apartments, furnished like a bachelor's lodgings, with bed, kitchen, and servants? What should prevent the transfer of such a structure from rail-road to canal-boat as occasion required? In five years probably, there will pass through this village a rail-road and a canal, by which, together, we shall have an unbroken chain of canal and rail-road communication with most of the principal seaboard cities of this country, and with half the towns and objects of curiosity in the west and north.

I build a tenement on wheels, considerably longer than the accommodations of single gentlemen at hotels, with a small kitchen, and such a cook as pleases the genius of republics. The vehicle shall be furnished, we will say, with tangent moveable rails, or some other convenience for wheeling off the track whenever there is occasion to stop or loiter. As I said before, it should be arranged also for transfer to a boat. In either case there shall be post-horses, as upon the English roads, ready to be put to at a moment's warning, and capable, upon the rail-road at least, of a sufficient rate of speed.

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What could be more delightful or more easy than to furnish this ambulatory cottage with light furniture from your stationary home, cram it with books, and such little refinements as you most miss abroad, and, purchasing provisions by the way, travel *under your own roof* from one end of the country to the other? Imagine me sending you word, some fine morning, from Jersey city, to come over and breakfast with me at *my cottage*, just arrived by rail-road from the country? Or going to the Springs with a house ready furnished? Or inviting you to accept of my hospitality during a trip to Baltimore, or Cincinnati, or Montreal! The English have anticipated this luxury in their expensive private yachts, with which they traverse the Levant, and drink wine from their own cellars at Joppa and Trebizond; but what is that to travelling the same distance on land, without storms or sea-sickness, with the choice of companions every hour, and at an hundredth part of the cost? The snail has been before us in the invention.

I presume, dear Doctor, that even you would be obliged to fish round considerably to find Owego on the map; yet the people here expect in a year or two to sit at their windows, and see all the fashion and curiosity, as well as the dignity and business of the world go by. This little village, to which prosperity

> "Is as the osprey to the fish, who takes it
> By sovereignty of nature,"

lies at the joint of a great cross of northern and western travel. The Erie rail-road will intersect here the canal

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which follows the Susquehannah to the Chenango, and you may as well come to Glenmary if you wish to see your friend, the General, on his annual trip to the Springs. Think what a superb route it will be for southern travellers. Instead of being filtered through all the sea-board cities, at great cost of money and temper, they will strike the Susquehannah at Columbia, and follow its delicious windings past Wyoming to Owego, where, turning west, they may steam up the small lakes to Niagara, or keeping on the Chenango, track that exquisite river by canal to the Mohawk, and so on to the Springs—all the way by the most lovely river-courses in the world. Pure air, new scenery, and a near and complete escape from the cities in the hot months, will be (the O-egoists think,) inducements enough to bring the southern cities, rank and file, in annual review before us. The canal-boat, of course, will be "the genteel thing" among the arrivals in this metropolis. Pleasure north and south, business east and west. We shall take our fashions from New Orleans, and I do not despair of seeing a café on the Susquehannah, with a French *dame de comptoir*, marble tables, and the Picayune newspaper. If my project of travelling-cottages should succeed, I shall offer the skirt of my Omega to such of my New Orleans friends as would like to pasture a cow during the summer, and when they and the orioles migrate in the autumn, why, we will up cottage and be off to the south too—freeze who likes in Tioga.

I wish my young trees liked this air of Italy as well as I. This ten days' sunshine has pinched their thirsty,

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tops, and it looks like mid-autumn from my seat under the bridge. No water, save a tricklet in the early morning. But *such* weather for pick-nick-ing! The buckwheat is sun-dried, and will yield but half a crop. The deer come down to the spring-heads, and the snakes creep to the river. Jenny toils at the deep-down well-bucket, and the minister prays for rain. I love the sun, and pray for no advent but yours.

You have never seen, I dare be certain, a volume of poems called "Mundi et Cordis Carmina," by Thomas Wade. It is one of those volumes killed, like my trees, in the general drought of poesy, but there is stuff in it worth the fair type on which it is printed, though Mr. Wade takes small pains to shape his verse to the common comprehension. I mention him now, because, in looking over his volume, I find he has been before me in particularizing the place where a letter is written, and goes beyond me, by specifying also the place where it should be *read*. "The Pencilled Letter" and its "Answer" are among his most intelligible poems, and I will give you their concluding lines as containing a new idea in amatory correspondence:

"Dearest, love me still;
I know new objects must thy spirit fill;
But yet I pray thee, do not love me less!
This write I where I dress. Bless thee! for ever bless!'

The reply has a very pretty conclusion, aside from the final oddity:

"Others may inherit
My heart's wild perfume; but the flower is thine.
This read where thou didst write. All blessings round thee throng."

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It is in your quality as bachelor that you get the loan of this idea, for in love, "a trick not worth an egg," so it be new, is worth the knowing.

Here's a precious coil! The red heifer has chew'd up a lace cape, and the breachy ox has run over the "bleach and lavender" of a seven days' wear and washing. It must be laid to the drought, unless a taste for dry lace as well as wet can be proved on the peccant heifer. The ox would to the drink—small blame to *him*. But lace is expensive fodder, and the heifer must be "hobbled"—so swears the washerwoman.

"Her injury
's the gaoler to her pity."

I have only the "turn-overs" left, dear Doctor, and I will cover them with one of Mr. Wade's sonnets, which will serve you, should you have occasion for an epithalamium. It is called "the Bride," and should be read fasting by a bachelor:

"Let the trim tapers burn exceeding brightly!
And the white bed be deck'd as for a goddess,
Who must be pillow'd, like high vesper, nightly
On couch ethereal! Be the curtains fleecy,
Like vesper's fairest, when calm nights are breezy—
Transparent, parting—showing what they hide,
Or strive to veil—by mystery deified!
The floor, gold-carpet, that her zone and boddice
May lie in honor where they gently fall,
Slow loosened from her form symmetrical—
Like mist from sunlight. Burn, sweet odors, burn!
For incense at the altar of her pleasure!
Let music breathe with a voluptuous measure,
And witchcrafts trance her wheresoe'er she turns."

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LETTER XIII.

This is not a very prompt answer to your last, my dear Doctor, for I intended to have taken my brains to you bodily, and replied to all your "whether-or-noes" over a broiled oyster at * * * * * . Perhaps I may bring this in my pocket. A brace of ramblers, brothers of my own, detained me for a while, but are flitting to-day; and Bartlett has been here a week, to whom, more particularly, I wish to do the honors of the scenery. We have climbed every hill-top that has the happiness of looking down on the Owaga and Suequehannah, and he agrees with me that a more lovely and habitable valley has never sat to him for its picture. Fortunately, on the day of his arrival, the dust of a six weeks' drought was washed from its face, and, barring the *wilt* that precedes autumn, the hill-sides were in holiday green and looked their fairest. He has enriched his portfolio with four or five delicious sketches, and if there were gratitude or sense of renown in trees and hills, they would have nodded their tops to the two of us. It is not every valley or pine-tree that finds painter and historian, but

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these are as insensible as beauty and greatness were ever to the claims of their trumpeters.

How long since was it that I wrote to you of Bartlett's visit to Constantinople? Not more than four or five weeks, it seems to me, and yet, here he is, on his return from a professional trip to *Canada*, with all its best scenery snug in his portmanteau! He steamed to Turkey and back, and steamed again to America, and will be once more in England in some twenty days—having visited and sketched the two extremities of the civilized world. Why, I might farm it on the Susquehannah and keep my town-house in Constantinople—(with money.) It seemed odd to me to turn over a drawing-book, and find on one leaf a freshly-pencilled sketch of a mosque, and on the next a view of Glenmary—my turnip-field in the foreground. And then the man himself—pulling a Turkish para and a Yankee shin-plaster from his pocket with the same pinch—shuffling to breakfast in my *abri* on the Susquehannah, in a pair of peaked-slippers of Constantinople, that smell as freshly of the bazaar as if they were bought yesterday—waking up with "*pekke! pekke!* my good fellow!" when William brings him his boots—and never seeing a blood-red maple (just turned with the frost) without fancying it the sanguine flag of the Bosphorus or the bright jacket of a Greek! All this unsettles me strangely. The phantasmagoria of my days of vagabondage flit before my eyes again. This, "by the by, do you remember, in Smyrna?" and "the view you recollect from the Seraglio!" and such like

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slip-slop of travellers, heard within reach of my corn and pumpkins, affects me like the mad poet's proposition,

> "To twitch the rainbow from the sky,
> And splice both ends together."

I have amused my artist friend since he has been here, with an entertainment not quite as expensive as the Holly Lodge fireworks, but quite as beautiful—the burning of log-heaps. Instead of gossipping over the tea-table these long and chilly evenings, the three or four young men who have been staying with us were very content to tramp into the woods with a bundle of straw and a match-box, and they have been initiated into the mysteries of "picking and piling," to the considerable improvement of the glebe of Glenmary. Shelley says,

> "Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is;"

and I am inclined to think that there are varieties of glory in its phenomena which would make it worth even your metropolitan while to come to the west and "burn fallow." At this season of the year—after the autumn droughts, that is to say—the whole country here is covered with a thin smoke, stealing up from the fires on every hill, in the depths of the woods, and on the banks of the river; and what with the graceful smoke-wreaths by day, and the blazing beacons all around the horizon by night, it adds much to the variety, and, I think, more to the beauty of our western October. It edifies the traveller who has bought wood by the pound in Paris, or stiffened for the want of it in the disforested Orient, to

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stand off a rifle-shot from a crackling wood, and toast himself by a thousand cords burnt for the riddance. What experience I have had of these holocausts on my own land has not diminished the sense of waste and wealth with which I first watched them. Paddy's dream of "rolling in a bin of gold guineas," could scarce have seemed more luxurious.

Bartlett and I, and the rest of us, in our small way, burnt enough, I dare say, to have made a comfortable drawing-room of Hyde Park in January, and the effects of the white light upon the trees above and around were glorious. But our fires were piles of logs and brush—small beer, of course, to the conflagration of a forest. I have seen one that was like the Thousand Columns of Constantinople ignited to a red heat, and covered with carbuncles and tongues of flame. It was a temple of fire—the floor, living coals—the roof, a heavy drapery of crimson—the aisles held up by blazing and innumerable pillars, sometimes swept by the wind till they stood in still and naked redness while the eye could see far into their depths, and again covered and wreathed and laved in ever-changing billows of flame. We want an American Tempesta or "Savage Rosa," to "wreak" such pictures on canvas; and perhaps the first step to it would be the painting of the foliage of an American autumn. These glorious wonders are peculiarities of our country; why should they not breed a peculiar school of effect and color?

"Gentle *Doughty*, tell me why!"

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Among the London news which has seasoned our breakfasts of late, I hear pretty authentically that Campbell is coming to look up his muse on the Susquehannah. He is at present writing the life of Petrarch, and superintending the new edition of his works, (to be illustrated in the style of Rogers's,) and, between whiles, projecting a new poem; and, my letters say, is likely to find the way, little known to poets, from the Temple of Fame to the Temple of Mammon. One would think it were scarce decent for Campbell to die without seeing Wyoming. I trust he will not. What would I not give to get upon a raft with him, and float down the Susquehannah a hundred miles to the scene of his Gertrude, watching his fine face while the *real* displaced the *idèal* valley of his imagination. I think it would trouble him. Probably in the warmth of composition and the familiarity of years, the imaginary scene has become enamelled and sunk into his mind, and it would remain the home of his poem after Wyoming itself had made a distinct impression on his memory. They would be two places—not one. He wrote it with some valley of his own land in his mind's eye, and gray Scotland and sunny and verdant Pennsylvania will scarce blend. But he will be welcome. Oh, how welcome! America would rise up to Campbell. He has been the bard of freedom, generous and chivalric in all his strains; and, nation of merchants as we are, I am mistaken if the string he has most played is not the master-chord of our national character. The enthusiasm of no people on earth is so easily awoke, and Campbell is the poet of en-

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thusiasm. The schoolboys have him by heart, and what lives upon their lips, will live and be beloved for ever.

It would be a fine thing, I have often thought, dear Doctor, if every English author would be at the pains to reap his laurels in this country. If they could overcome their indignation at our disgraceful robbery of their copyrights, and come among the people who read them for the love they bear them—read them as they are not read in England, without prejudice or favor, personal or political,—it would be more like taking a peep at posterity than they think. In what is the judgment of posterity better than that of contemporaries? Simply in that the author is seen from a distance—his personal qualities lost to the eye, and his literary stature seen in proper relief and proportion. We know nothing of the degrading rivalries and difficulties of his first efforts, or, if we do, we do not realize them, never having known him till success sent his name over the water. His reputation is a Minerva to us—sprung full-grown to our knowledge. We praise him, if we like him, with the spirit in which we criticize an author of another age—with no possible private bias. Witness the critiques upon Bulwer in this country, compared with those of his countrymen. What review has ever given him a tithe of his deservings in England! Their cold acknowledgment of his merits reminds one of Enobarbus's civility to Menas:

> "Sir! I have praised you
> When you have well deserved ten times as much
> As I have said you did!"

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I need not, to you, dear Doctor, enlarge upon the benefits, political and social, to both countries, which would follow the mutual good-will of our authors. We shall never have theirs while we plunder them so barefacedly as now, and I trust in heaven we shall, some time or other, see men in Congress who will go deeper for their opinions than the circular of a pirating bookseller.

I wish you would send me a copy of Dawes's poems when they appear. I have long thought *he* was one of the unappreciated; but I see that his fine play of Athanasia is making stir among the paragraphers. Rufus Dawes is a poet if God ever created one, and he *lives* his vocation as well as *imagines* it. I hope he will shuffle off the heavenward end of his mortal coil under the cool shades of my Omega. He is our Coleridge, and his talk should have reverent listeners. I have seldom been more pleased at a change in the literary kaleidoscope, than at his awaking popularity; and, I pray you, blow what breath you have into his new-spread sail. Cranch, the artist, who lived with me in Italy, (a beautiful *scholar* in the art, whose hand is fast overtaking his head,) has, I see by the papers, made a capital sketch of him. Do you know whether it is to be engraved for the book?

Ossian represents the ghosts of his heroes lamenting that they had not had their fame, and it is a pity, I think, that we had not some literary apostle to tell us, from the temple of our Athens, who are the unknown great. Certain it is, they often live among us, and achieve their greatness unrecognized. How profoundly dull was

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England to the merits of Charles Lamb till he died! Yet he was a fine illustration of my remark just now. America was posterity to him. The writings of all our young authors were tinctured with imitation of his style, when, in England, (as I personally know,) it was difficult to light upon a person who had read his Elia. Truly "the root of a great name is in the dead body." There is Walter Savage Landor, whose Imaginary Conversations contain more of the virgin ore of thought than any six modern English writers together, and how many persons in any literary circle know whether he is alive or dead—an author of Queen Elizabeth's time or Queen Victoria's? He is a man of fortune, and has bought Boccacio's garden at Fiesolé, and there, upon the classic Africus, he is tranquilly achieving his renown, and it will be unburied, and acknowledged when he is dead. Travellers will make pilgrimages to the spot where Boccacio and Landor have lived, and wonder that they did not mark while it was done—this piling of Ossa on Pelion.

By the way, Mr. Landor has tied me to the tail of his immortality, for an offence most innocently committed; and I trust his biographer will either let me slip off at "Lethe's wharf," by expurgating the book of me, or do me justice in a note. When I was in Florence, I was indebted to him for much kind attention and hospitality; and I considered it one of the highest of my good fortunes abroad to go to Fiesolé, and dine in the scene of the Decameron with an author who would, I thought, live as long as Boccacio. Mr. Landor has a glorious

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collection of paintings, and at parting he presented me with a beautiful picture by Cuyp, which I had particularly admired, and gave me some of my most valuable letters to England, where I was then going. I mention it to show the terms on which we separated. While with him on my last visit, I had expressed a wish that the philosophical conversations in his books were separated from the political, and republished in a cheap form in America; and the following morning, before daylight, his servant knocked at the door of my lodgings, with a package of eight or ten octavo volumes, and as much manuscript, accompanied by a note from Mr. Landor, committing the whole to my discretion. These volumes, I should tell you, were interleaved and interlined very elaborately, and having kept him company under his olive-trees, were in rather a dilapidated condition. How to add such a bulk of precious stuff to my baggage, I did not know. I was at the moment of starting, and it was very clear that even if the custom-house officers took no exception to them, (they are outlawed through Italy for their political doctrines,) they would never survive a rough journey over the Appenines and Alps. I did the best I could. I sent them with a note to Theodore Fay, who was then in Florence, requesting him to forward them to America by ship from Leghorn; a commission which I knew that kindest and most honorable of men and poets, would execute with the fidelity of an angel. So he did. He handed them to an American straw-bonnet maker, (who, he had no reason to suppose, was the malicious donkey he after-

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wards proved,) and through him they were shipped and received in New-York. I expected, at the time I left Florence, to make but a short stay in England, and sail in the same summer for America; instead of which I remained in England two years, at the close of which appeared a new book of Mr. Landor's Pericles and Aspasia. I took it up with delight, and read it through to the last chapter, where, of a sudden, the author jumps from the academy of Plato, clean over three thousand years, upon the shoulders of a false American, who had robbed him of invaluable manuscripts! So there I go to posterity astride the Finis of Pericles and Aspasia! I had corresponded occasionally with Mr. Landor, and in one of my letters had stated the fact, that the manuscripts had been committed to Mr. Miles, to forward to America. He called, in consequence, at the shop of this person, who denied any knowledge of the books, leaving Mr. Landor to suppose that I had been either most careless or most culpable in my management of his trust. The books had, however, after a brief stay in New-York, followed me to London; and Fay and Mr. Landor both happening there together, the explanation was made, and the books and manuscripts restored unharmed to the author. I was not long enough in London afterwards to know whether I was forgiven by Mr. Landor; but, as his book has not reached a second edition, I am still writhing in my purgatory of print.

I have told you this long story, dear Doctor, because I am sometimes questioned on the subject by the literary people with whom you live, and hereafter I shall trans-

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fer them to your button for the whole matter. But what a letter! Write me two for it, and revenge yourself in the postage.

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LETTER XIV.

THIS is *return month*, dear Doctor, and if it were only to be in fashion, you should have a *quid pro quo* for your four pages. October restores and returns; your gay friends and invalids return to the city; the birds and the planters return to the South; the seed returns to the granary; the brook at my feet is noisy again with its returned waters; the leaves are returning to the earth; and the heart, that has been out-of-doors while the summer lasted, comes home from its wanderings by field and stream, and returns to feed on its harvest of new thoughts, past pleasures, and strengthened and confirmed affections. At this time of the year, too, you expect a return (not of pasteboard) for your "visits;" but, as you have made me no visit, either friendly or professional, I owe you nothing. And that is the first consolation I have found for your short-comings, (or no-comings-at-all,) to Glenmary.

Now, consider my arms a-kimbo, if you please, while I ask you what you mean by calling Glenmary "back-woods!" Faith, I wish it were more back-woods than it is. Here be cards to be left, Sir, morning calls to be

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made, body-coat soirées, and ceremony enough to keep one's most holiday manners well aired. The two miles' distance between me and Owego serves me for no exemption, for the village of Canewana, which is a mile nearer on the road, is equally within the latitude of silver forks; and dinners are given in both, which want no one of the belongings of Belgrave-square, save port-wine and powdered footmen. I think it is in one of Miss Austin's novels that a lady claims it to be a smart neighborhood in which she "dines with four-and-twenty families." If there are not more than half as many in Owego who give dinners, there are twice as many who ask to tea and give ice-cream and champaign. Then for the fashions, there is as liberal a sprinkling of French bonnets in the Owego church as in any village congregation in England. And for the shops—that subject is worthy of a sentence by itself. When I say there is no need to go to New-York for hat, boots, or coat, I mean that the Owego tradesmen, (if you are capable of describing what you want,) are capable of supplying you with the best and most modish of these articles. Call you that "back-woods?"

All this, I am free to confess, clashes with the *beau ideal* of the

"*Beatus ille qui procul*," etc.

I had myself imagined, (and continued to imagine for some weeks after coming here,) that, so near the primeval wilderness, I might lay up my best coat and my ceremony in lavender, and live in fustian and a plain way. I looked forward to the delights of a broad straw hat,

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large shoes, baggy habiliments, and leave to sigh or whistle without offence; and it seemed to me that it was the conclusion of a species of apprenticeship, and the beginning of my "freedom." To be above no clean and honest employment of one's time, to drive a pair of horses or a yoke of oxen with equal alacrity, and to be commented on for neither the one nor the other; to have none but wholesome farming cares, and work with nature and honest yeomen, and be quite clear of mortifications, envies, advice, remonstrance, coldness, misapprehensions, and etiquettes; this is what I, like most persons who "forswear the full tide of the world," looked upon as the blessed promise of retirement. But, alas! wherever there is a butcher's shop and a post-office, an apothecary and a blacksmith, an "Arcade" and a milliner—wherever the conveniences of life are, in short—there has already arrived the Procrustes of opinion. Men's eyes will look on you and bring you to judgment, and unless you would live on wild meat and corn-bread in the wilderness, with neither friend nor helper, you must give in to a compromise—yield half at least of your independence, and take it back in common-place comfort. This is very every-day wisdom to those who know it, but you are as likely as any man in the world to have sat with your feet over the fire, and fancied yourself on a wild horse in a prairie, with nothing to distinguish you from the warlike Camanche, except capital wine in the cellar of your wigwam, and the last new novel and play, which should reach this same wigwam—you have not exactly

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determined how! Such "pyramises are goodly things," but they are built of the smoke of your cigar.

This part of the country is not destitute of the chances of adventure, however, and twice in the year, at least, you may, if you choose, open a valve for your spirits. One half the population of the neighborhood is engaged in what is called *lumbering*, and until the pine timber of the forest can be counted like the cedars of Lebanon, this vocation will serve the uses of the mobs of England, the revolutions of France, and the plots of Italy. I may add the music and theatres of Austria and Prussia, the sensual indulgence of the Turk, and the intrigue of the Spaniard; for there is in every people under the sun a *superflu* of spirits unconsumed by common occupation, which, if not turned adroitly or accidentally to some useful or harmless end, will expend its reckless energy in trouble and mischief.

The preparations for the adventures of which I speak, though laborious, are often conducted like a frolic. The felling of the trees in mid-winter, the cutting of shingles, and the drawing out on the snow, are employments preferred by the young men to the tamer but less arduous work of the farm-yard; and in the temporary and uncomfortable *shanties*, deep in the woods, subsisting often on nothing but pork and whiskey, they find metal more attractive than village or fireside. The small streams emptying into the Susquehannah are innumerable, and eight or ten miles back from the river the arks are built, and the materials of the rafts collected, ready to launch with the first thaw. I live, myself, as you know, on one

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of these tributaries, a quarter of a mile from its junction. The Owaga trips along at the foot of my lawn, as private and untroubled for the greater part of the year as Virginia Water at Windsor; but, as it swells in March, the noise of voices and hammering coming out from the woods above, warn us of the approach of an ark, and at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour the rude structure shoots by, floating high on the water without its lading, (which it takes in at the village below,) and manned with a singing and saucy crew, who dodge the branches of the trees, and work their steering paddles with an adroitness and nonchalance which sufficiently shows the character of the class. The sudden bends which the river takes in describing my woody Omega, put their steersmanship to the test; and when the leaves are off the trees, it is a curious sight to see the bulky monsters, shining with new boards, whirling around in the swift eddies, and, when caught by the current again, gliding off among the trees like a singing and swearing phantom of an unfinished barn.

At the village they take wheat and pork into the arks, load their rafts with plank and shingles, and wait for the return of the freshet. It is a fact you may not know, that when a river is rising, the middle is the highest, and *vice versa* when falling, sufficiently proved by the experience of the raftsmen, who, if they start before the flow is at its top, cannot keep their crafts from the shore. A pent-house, barely sufficient for a man to stretch himself below, is raised on the deck, with a fireplace of earth and loose stone, and with what provision

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they can afford, and plenty of whiskey, they shove out into the stream. Thenceforward it is *vogue la galére!* They have nothing to do, all day, but abandon themselves to the current, sing and dance and take their turn at the steering-oars; and when the sun sets they look out for an eddy, and pull in to the shore. The stopping-places are not very numerous, and are well known to all who follow the trade; and, as the river swarms with rafts, the getting to land, and making sure of a fastening, is a scene always of great competition, and often of desperate fighting. When all is settled for the night, however, and the fires are lit on the long range of the flotilla, the raftsmen get together over their whiskey and provender, and tell the thousand stories of their escapes and accidents; and with the repetition of this, night after night, the whole rafting population along the five hundred miles of the Susquehannah becomes partially acquainted, and forms a sympathetic *corps*, whose excitement and *esprit* might be roused to very dangerous uses.

By daylight they are cast off and once more on the current, and in five or seven days they arrive at tide water, where the crew is immediately discharged, and start, usually on foot, to follow the river home again. There are several places in the navigation which are dangerous, such as rapids and dam-sluices; and what with these, and the scenes at the eddies, and their pilgrimage through a thinly settled and wild country home again, they see enough of adventure to make them fireside heroes, and incapacitate them, (while their vigor lasts,

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at least,) for all the more quiet habits of the farmer. The consequence is easy to be seen. Agriculture is but partially followed throughout the country, and while these cheap facilities for transporting produce to the sea-board exist, those who are contented to stay at home, and cultivate the rich river lands of the country, are sure of high prices and a ready reward for their labor.

Moral. Come to the Susquehannah, and settle on a farm. You did not know what I was driving at all this while!

The raftsmen who "follow the Delaware," (to use their own poetical expression,) are said to be a much wilder class than those on the Susquehannah. In returning to Owega, by different routes, I have often fallen in with parties of both; and certainly nothing could be more entertaining than to listen to their tales. In a couple of years the canal route on the Susquehannah will lay open this rich vein of the picturesque and amusing, and as the tranquil boat glides peacefully along the river bank, the traveller will be surprised with the strange effect of these immense flotillas, with their many fires and wild people, lying in the glassy bends of the solitary stream, the smoke stealing through the dark forest, and the confusion of a hundred excited voices breaking the silence. In my trip down the river in the spring, I saw enough that was novel in this way to fill a new portfolio for Bartlett, and I intend he shall raft it with me to salt water the next time he comes among us.

How delicious are these October noons! They will soon chill, I am afraid, and I shall be obliged to give up

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my out-of-door's habits; but I shall do it unwillingly. I have changed sides under the bridge, to sit with my feet in the sun, and I trust this warm corner will last me till November at least. The odor of the dying leaves, and the song of the strengthening brook, are still sufficient allurements, and even your rheumatism, (of which the Latin should be *podagra*,) might safely keep me company till dinner. Adieu, dear Doctor! write me a long account of Vestris and Matthews, (how *you* like them, I mean, for I know very well how I like them myself,) and thank me for turning over to you a new leaf of American romance. You are welcome to write a novel, and call it "The Raftsman of the Susquehannah,

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LETTER XV.

"When did I descend the Susquehannah on a raft?" —Never, dear Doctor! But I have descended it in a steamboat, and that may surprise you more. It is an *in*-navigable river, it is true: and it is true, too, that there are some twenty dams across it between Owego and Wilkes-barre; yet have I steamed it from Owego to Wyoming, one hundred and fifty miles, in twelve hours—*on the top of a freshet.* The dams were deep under water, and the river was as smooth as the Hudson. And now you will wonder how a steamer came, by fair means, at Owego.

A year or two since, before there was a prospect of extending the Pennsylvania canal to this place, it became desirable to bring the coal of "the keystone state" to these southern counties by some cheaper conveyance than horse-teams. A friend of mine, living here, took it into his head that, as salmon and shad will ascend a fall of twenty feet in a river, the propulsive energy of their tails might possibly furnish a hint for a steamer that would shoot up dams and rapids. The suggestion was made to a Connecticut man, who, of course, undertook it. He would have been less than a Yankee if he had not *tried.* The product of

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his ingenuity was the steamboat "Susquehannah," drawing but eighteen inches; and, besides her side-paddles, having an immense wheel in the stern, which, playing in the slack water of the boat, would drive her up Niagara, if she would but hold together. The principal weight of her machinery hung upon two wooden arches running fore and aft, and altogether she was a neat piece of contrivance, and promised fairly to answer the purpose.

I think the "Susquehannah" had made three trips when she broke a shaft, and was laid up; and, what with one delay and another, the canal was half completed between her two havens before the experiment had fairly succeeded. A month or two since, the proprietors determined to run her down the river for the purpose of selling her, and I was invited among others to join in the trip.

The only offices professionally filled on board were those of the engineer and pilot. Captain, mate, firemen, steward, cook, and chambermaid, were represented *en amateur* by gentlemen passengers. We rang the bell at the starting hour with the zeal usually displayed in that department, and, by the assistance of the current, got off in the usual style of a steamboat departure, wanting only the newsboys and pick-pockets. With a stream running at five knots, and paddles calculated to mount a cascade, we could not fail to take the river in gallant style, and before we had regulated our wood-piles and pantry, we were backing water at Athens, twenty miles on our way.

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Navigating the Susquehannah is very much like dancing "the cheat." You are always making straight up to a mountain, with no apparent possibility of escaping contact with it, and it is an even chance up to the last moment which side of it you are to *chassez* with the current. Meantime the sun seems capering about to all points of the compass, the shadows falling in every possible direction, and north, south, east, and west, changing places with the familiarity of a masquerade. The blindness of the river's course is increased by the innumerable small islands in its bosom, whose tall elms and close-set willows meet half-way those from either shore; and, the current very often dividing above them, it takes an old voyager to choose between the shaded alleys, by either of which you would think Arethusa might have eluded her lover.

My own mental occupation, as we glided on, was the distribution of white villas along the shore, on spots where nature seemed to have arranged the ground for their reception. I saw thousands of sites where the lawns were made, the terraces defined and levelled, the groves tastefully clumped, the ancient trees ready with their broad shadows, the approaches to the water laid out, the banks sloped, and in every thing the labor of art seemingly all anticipated by nature. I grew tired of exclaiming, to the friend who was beside me, "What an exquisite site for a villa! What a sweet spot for a cottage!" If I had had the power to people the Susquehannah by the wave of a wand, from those I know capable of appreciating its beauty, what a paradise I could

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have spread out between my own home and Wyoming! It was pleasant to know, that by changes scarcely less than magical, these lovely banks will soon be amply seen and admired, and probably as rapidly seized upon and inhabited by persons of taste. The gangs of laborers at the foot of every steep cliff, doing the first rough work of the canal, gave promise of a speedy change in the aspect of this almost unknown river.

It was sometimes ticklish steering among the rafts and arks with which the river was thronged, and we never passed one without getting the raftsman's rude hail. One of them furnished my vocabulary with a new measure of speed. He stood at the stern oar of a shingle raft, gaping at us, open-mouthed as we came down upon him. "Wal!" said he, as we shot past, "you're going a *good hickory*, Mister!" It was amusing, again, to run suddenly round a point and come upon a raft with a minute's warning; the voyagers as little expecting an intrusion upon their privacy, as a retired student to be unroofed in a London garret. The different modes of expressing surprise became at last quite a study to me, yet total indifference was not infrequent; and there were some who, I think, would not have risen from their elbows if the steamer had flown bodily over them.

We passed the Falls of Wyalusing (most musical of Indian names) and Buttermilk Falls, both cascades worthy of being known and sung, and twilight overtook us some two hours from Wyoming. We had no lights on board, and the engineer was unwilling to run in the dark; so our pilot being an old raftsman, we put into

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the first "eddy," and moored for the night. These eddies, by the way, would not easily be found by a stranger, but to the practised navigators of the river they are all numbered and named like harbors on a coast. The strong current, in the direct force of which the clumsy raft would find it impossible to come to, and moor, is at these places turned back by some projection of the shore, or ledge at the bottom, and a pool of still water is formed in which the craft may lie secure for the night. The lumbermen give a cheer when they have steered successfully in, and, springing joyfully ashore, drive their stakes, eat, dance, quarrel, and sleep; and many a good tale is told of rafts slily unmoored, and set adrift at midnight by parties from the eddies above, and of the consequent adventures of running in the dark. We had on board two gentlemen who had earned an independence in this rough vocation, and their stories, told laughingly against each other, developed well the expedient and hazard of the vocation. One of them had once been mischievously cut adrift by the owner of a rival cargo, when moored in an eddy with an ark-load of grain. The article was scarce and high in the markets below, and he had gone to sleep securely under his pent-house, and was dreaming of his profits, when he suddenly awoke with a shock, and discovered that he was high and dry upon a sedgy island some miles below his moorings. The freshet was falling fast, and soon after daylight his competitor for the market drifted past with a laugh, and confidently shouted out a good-bye till another voyage. The triumphant ark-master floated on all day, moored again

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at night, and arrived safely at tide-water, where the first object that struck his sight was the ark he had left in the sedges, its freight sold, its owner preparing to return home, and the market of course forestalled! The "Roland for his Oliver" had, with incredible exertion, *dug a canal* for his ark, launched her on the slime, and by risking the night-running, past him unobserved and gained a day—a feat as illustrative of the American genius for emergency as any on record.*

It was a still, starlight night, and the river was laced with the long reflections of the raft-fires, while the softened songs of the men over their evening carouse, came to us along the smooth water with the effect of far better music. What with "wooding" at two or three places, however, and what with the excitement of the day, we were too fatigued to give more than a glance and a passing note of admiration to the beauty of the scene, and the next question was, how to come by Sancho's "blessed invention of sleep." We had been detained at

* This quality of the American character is a necessary result of the habits of a new country; but, little as it has been noticed, it is curious how completely a turn for *expedient* is the never-failing trait of a Yankee. You will scarcely find a boy without a nail or piece of string in his pocket, and a gimlet, if he can afford it. It is the bent of his mind to be ready against accident, to supply deficiencies, to find something that *will* for any thing that *wont* do. His pride is, whatever you suggest, to suggest something better. A boy who sometimes brings berries to us, came to me a day or two since followed by a cur with a very long tail.

"Your dog would look better with his tail cut off," I remarked.

"Yes—or *druv in!*" was the immediate answer.

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the wooding-places, and had made no calculation to lie by a night. There were no beds on board, and not half room enough in the little cabin to distribute to each passenger six feet by two of floor. The shore was wild, and not a friendly lamp glimmering on the hills; but the pilot at last recollected having once been to a house a mile or two back from the river, and with the diminished remainder of our provender as a *pis aller* in case of finding no supper in our forage, we started in search. We stumbled and scrambled, and delivered our benisons to rock and briar, till I would fain have lodged with Trinculo "under a moon-calf's gaberdine," but by and by our leader fell upon a track, and a light soon after glimmered before us. We approached through cleared fields, and, without the consent of the farmer's dog, to whose wishes on the subject we were compelled to do violence, the blaze of a huge fire (it was a chilly night of spring) soon bettered our resignation. A stout, white-headed fellow of twenty-eight or thirty, barefooted, sat in a cradle, see-sawing before the fire, and without rising when we entered, or expressing the slightest surprise at our visit, he replied to our questions, that he was the father of some twelve sorrel and barefoot copies of himself huddled into the corner, that "the woman" was his wife, and that we were welcome "to stay." Upon this the "woman" for the first time looked at us, counted us with the nods of her head, and disappeared with the only candle.

When his wife re-appeared, the burly farmer extracted himself with some difficulty from the cradle, and without

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a word passing between them, entered upon his office as chamberlain. We followed him up stairs, where we were agreeably surprised to find three very presentable beds; and as I happened to be the last and fifth, I felicitated myself on the good chance of sleeping alone, "clapped into my prayers," as was recommended to Master Barnardine, and was asleep before the candle-snuff. I should have said that mine was a "single bed," in a sort of a closet partitioned off from the main chamber.

How long I had travelled in dream-land I have no means of knowing, but I was awoke by a touch on the shoulder, and the information that I must make room for a bedfellow. It was a soft-voiced young gentleman, as well as I could perceive, with his collar turned down, and a book under his arm. Without very clearly remembering where I was, I represented to my proposed friend that I occupied as nearly as possible the whole of the bed—to say nothing of a foot, over which he might see (the *foot*) by looking where it outreached the coverlet. It was a very short bed, indeed.

"It was large enough for me till you came," said the stranger, modestly.

"Then I am the intruder?" I asked.

"No intrusion if you will share with me," he said; "but as this is my bed, and I have no resource but the kitchen-fire, perhaps you will let me in."

There was no resisting his tone of good humor, and my friend by this time having prepared himself to take up as little room as possible, I consented that he should blow out the candle and get under the blanket. The ar-

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gument and the effort of making myself small as he crept in, had partially waked me, and before my ears were sealed up again, I learned that my companion, who proved rather talkative, was the village schoolmaster. He taught for twelve dollars a month and his board—taking the latter a week at a time with the different families to which his pupils belonged. For the present week, he was quartered upon our host, and, having been out visiting past the usual hour of bed-time, he was not aware of the arrival of strangers till he found me on his pillow.

I went to sleep, admiring the amiable temper of my new friend under the circumstances, but awoke presently with a sense of suffocation. The schoolmaster was fast asleep, but his arms were clasped tightly round my throat. I disengaged them without waking him, and composed myself again.

Once more I awoke half suffocated. My friend's arms had found their way again round my neck, and, though evidently fast asleep, he was drawing me to him with a clasp I found it difficult to unloose. I shook him broad awake, and begged him to take notice that he was sleeping with a perfect stranger. He seemed very much annoyed at having disturbed me, made twenty apologies, and turning his back, soon fell asleep. I followed his example, wishing him a new turn to his dream.

A third time I sprang up choking from the pillow, drawing my companion fairly on end with me. I could stand it no longer. Even when half aroused, he could hardly be persuaded to let go his hold of my neck. I

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jumped out of bed, and flung open the window for a little air. The moon had risen, and the night was exquisitely fine. A brawling brook ran under the window, and after a minute or two, being thoroughly awaked, I looked at my watch in the moonlight, and found it wanted but an hour or two of morning. Afraid to risk my throat again, and remembering that I could not fairly quarrel with my friend, who had undoubtedly a right to embrace, after his own fashion, any intruder who ventured into his proper bed, I went down stairs, and raked open the embers of the kitchen fire, which served me for less affectionate company till dawn. How and where he could have acquired his caressing habits, were subjects upon which I speculated unsatisfactorily over the coals.

My companions were called up at sunrise by the landlord, and as we were paying for our lodging, the schoolmaster came down to see us off. I was less surprised when I came to look at him by daylight. It was a fair, delicate boy of sixteen, whose slender health had probably turned his attention to books, and who, perhaps, had never slept away from his mother till he went abroad to teach school. Quite satisfied with one experiment at filling the maternal relation, I wished him a less refractory bedfellow, and we hastened on board.

The rafts were under way before us, and the tortoise had overtaken the hare, for we passed several that we had passed higher up, and did not fail to get a jeer for our sluggishness. An hour or two brought us to Wilkesbarre, an excellent hotel, good breakfast, and new and

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kind friends; and so ended my trip on the Susquehannah. Some other time I will tell you how beautiful is the valley of Wyoming, which I have since seen in the holiday colors of October. Thereby hangs a tale too, worth telling and hearing; and as a promise is good parting stuff, adieu!

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LETTER XVI.

THE books and the music came safe to hand, dear Doctor, but I trust we are not to stand upon *quid-pro-quosities*. The barrel of buck-wheat not only cost me nothing, but I have had my uses of it in the raising, and can no more look upon it as *value*, than upon a flower which I pluck to smell, and give away when it is faded. I have sold some of my crops for the oddity of the sensation; and I assure you it is very much like being paid for dancing when the ball is over. Why, consider the offices this very buck-wheat has performed. There was the trust in Providence, in the purchase of the seed—*a sermon*. There were the exercise and health in ploughing, harrowing, and sowing—*prescription* and *pill*. There was the performance of the grain, its sprouting, its flowering, its earing, and its ripening—a great deal more amusing than *a play*. Then there were the harvesting, thrashing, fanning and grinding—a sort of pastoral collection, publication and purgation by criticism. Now, suppose your clergyman, your physician, your favorite theatrical corps, your publisher, printer, and critic,

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thrashed and sold in bags for six shillings a bushel! I assure you the cases are similar, except that the buckwheat makes probably the more savoury cake.

The new magazine was welcome; the more, that it brought back to me my own days of rash adventure in such ticklish craft, with a pleasant sense of deliverance from its risk and toil. The imprint of "No. I., Vol. I.," reads to me like a bond for the unreserved abandonment of time and soul. Truly, youth is wisely provided with little forethought, and much hope. What child would learn the alphabet if he could see at a glance the toil that lies behind it? I look upon the fresh type and read the sanguine prospectus of this new-born monthly, and remember, with astonishment, the thoughtlessness with which, years ago, I launched in the same gay colors such a venture on the wave. It is a voyage that requires plentiful stores, much experience of the deeps and shallows of the literary seas, and a hand at every halyard; yet, to abandon my simile, I proposed to be publisher and editor, critic and contributor; and I soon found that I might as well have added *reader* to my manifold offices. No one who has not tried this vocation can have any idea of the difficulty of procuring the light, yet condensed; the fragmented, yet finished; the good-tempered and gentlemanly, yet high-seasoned and dashing papers necessary to a periodical. A man who can write them, can, in our country, put himself to a more profitable use —and does. The best magazine writer living, in my opinion, is Edward Everett; and he governs a State with the same time and attention which in England, per-

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haps, would be cramped to contributing to a review. Calhoun might write wonderfully fine articles. Legaré, of Charleston, has the right talent, with the learning. Crittenden, of the Senate, I should think might have written the most brilliant satirical papers. But these, and others like them, are men the country and their own ambition cannot spare. There is a younger class of writers, however; and though the greater number of these, too, fill responsible stations in society, separate from general literature, they might be induced, probably, were the remuneration adequate, to lend their support to a periodical "till the flower of their fame shall be more blown." Among them are Felton and Longfellow, both professors at Cambridge; and Sumner and Henry Cleaveland, lawyers of Boston—a knot of writers who sometimes don the cumbrous armor of the North American Review, but who would show to more advantage in the lighter harness of the monthlies. I could name twenty more to any one interested to know them, all valuable allies to a periodical; but no literary man questions that. We have in our country talent enough, if there were the skill and means to put it judiciously together.

The "American Museum," the new-born monthly which has stirred these memories, has certainly put out a first number of uncommon cleverness. I tell you so circumstantially, dear Doctor, because the leaves were uncut, and I presume you sent it to me unread. It has a paper on the fabulous Atlantis, full of ingenuity and humor; and in a tale called Ligeia, (by Mr. Poe,) there is a fine march of description, which has a touch

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of D'Israeli's quality, and is worthy of a more intelligible sequel. The critical papers show learning and taste, and, (as usual,) the poetry is the indifferent feature. Yet, what an advent to the muses it would be if it were otherwise, when in this one number there are some nineteen deliberate flights *towards* Parnassus. Yet one or two of these nineteen are fairly flown, the editor's for one. Then here is a true thought from that true spirit, Rufus Dawes:

> "Men drew a picture, false in light and shade,
> And held it up as his similitude,
> And Byron chose *to be* the thing they made."

And in as pretty a bit of plagiarism as you would wish to see, here is a neat example of the expansibility of poetical gold:

> The mellow moon loves crystal brooks,
> She wraps them in her silver zone:
> Each wavelet to the goddess looks,
> And humbly worships her alone;
> While from her azure throne on high,
> Midst boundless space and stormy mazes,
> The orb in silent majesty
> On every limpid streamlet gazes.

All of which you see is got out of Moore's pure ore:

> "The moon looks
> On many brooks,
> The brook can see no moon but this."

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Coleridge and others have mourned over the age of reviews, as the downfall and desecration of authorship; but I am inclined to think authors gain more than they lose, by the facility of criticism. What chance has a book on a shelf, waiting to be called for by the purchaser uninformed of its merits, to one whose beauties and defects have been canvassed by these Mercury-winged messengers, volant and universal as the quickest news of the hour? How slow and unsympathetic must have been the progress of a reputation, when the judicious admirer of a new book could but read and put it by, expressing his delight, at farthest, to his immediate friend or literary correspondent? The apprehensive and honest readers of a book are never many; but in our days, if it reach but one of these, what is the common outlet of his enthusiasm? Why, a trumpet-tongued review, that makes an entire people partakers of his appreciation, in the wax and wane of a single moon. Greedily as all men and women devour books, ninety-nine in a hundred require them to be first cut up, liable else, like children at their meals, to swallow the wrong morsel. Yet, like children still, when the good is pointed out, they digest it as well as another, and so is diffused an understanding, as well as prompt admiration of the author. For myself, I am free to confess I am one of those who like to take the first taste of an author in a good review. I look upon the reviewer as a sensible friend, who came before me to the feast, and recommends me the dish that has most pleased him. There is a fellowship in agreeing that it is good. I have often wished there were a

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Washington among the critics—some one upon whose judgment, freedom from paltry motives, generosity and fairness, I could pin my faith blindly and implicitly. Dilke, of the London Athenæum, is the nearest approach to this character, and a good proof of it is an order frequently given, (a London publisher informed me,) by country gentlemen:—"Send me every thing the Athenæum praises." Though a man of letters, Dilke is not an author, and, by the way, dear Doctor, I think in that lies the best qualification, if not the only chance for the impartiality of the critic. How few authors are capable of praising a book by which their own is thrown into shadow. "Why does Plato never mention Zenophon? and why does Zenophon inveigh against Plato?"

But I think there is less to fear from jealousy, than from the want of sympathy between writers on different subjects, or in different styles. D'Israeli* the elder,

* In an old number of the Hibernian Magazine, published in 1799, I have chanced to light upon a notice of the first beginnings in literature of D'Israeli the elder, who was then but a few years older than the author of Vivian Grey, (his son,) is now. It may be interesting to preserve it here.

"D'Israeli was the son of a respectable Italian merchant, who long resided in England. He was educated at Amsterdam, and having made the tour of France and Italy, returned with a valuable library of French and Italian books, and a confirmed taste for French literature. His first avowed performance is the "Poetical Epistle on the Abuse of Satire," which was written, it appears, to gratify a certain man of letters who was his neighbor, and who smarted under the scourge of Peter Pindar. This effusion afterwards procured him the friendship of Dr. Wolcott. In 1790 he ad-

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from whom I have just quoted, sounds the depth of this matter with the very plummet of truth. "Every man of genius has a manner of his own; a mode of thinking and a habit of style; and usually decides on a work as it approximates or varies from his own. When one great author depreciates another, it has often no worse source than his own taste. The witty Cowley despised the natural Chaucer; the cold, classical Boileau, the rough sublimity of Crebillon; the refining Marivaux, the familiar Molière. The deficient sympathy in these men of genius, for modes of feeling opposite to their own, was the real cause of their opinions; and thus it happens that even superior genius is so often liable to be unjust and false in its decisions."

dressed a poem, entitled "A Defence of Poesy," to the Laureat of England. The whole edition, except the few copies sold, was burnt by the author, undeservedly, it seems, for the Monthly Review praises it highly. In 1791 he published his Curiosities of Literature. In 1793 he produced his Dissertation on Anecdotes, in which he vindicates the detailer of anecdotes from the charge of being a literary trifler. This was followed, in 1795, by his Essay on the Literary Character. In 1796 he produced a volume of Miscellanies; his last performance was a philosophical novel, in two volumes, called *Vaurien*. The object was to satirize certain literary monstrosities which have lately been obtruded upon the public. Some of the game was doubtless fair; a few of the characters were, however, too much overstrained and caricatured. He is at this time (1799) engaged upon a work which, from a published specimen, promises considerably to exalt his reputation. It is to consist of several romances, embellished with original poetry. Mr. D'Israeli is unmarried, and at this time about thirty-one years of age. His habits and connexions are strictly literary. Few read and write more. Scarcely any compose with equal rapidity.

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Apropos of English periodicals, we get them now almost wet from the press, and they seem far off and foreign no longer. But there is one (to me) melancholy note in the Pæan with which the Great Western was welcomed. *In literature we are no longer a distinct nation.* The triumph of Atlantic steam navigation has driven the smaller drop into the larger, and London has become the centre. Farewell nationality! The English language now marks the limits of a new literary empire, and America is a suburb. Our themes, our resources, the disappearing savage, and the retiring wilderness, the free thought, and the action as free, the spirit of daring innovation, and the irreverent question of usage, the picturesque mixture of many nations in an equal home, the feeling of expanse, of unsubserviency, of distance from time-hallowed authority and prejudice—all the elements which were working gradually but gloriously together to make us a nation by ourselves, have, in this approximation of shores, either perished for our using, or slipped within the clutch of England. What effect the now near and jealous criticism of that country will have upon our politics is a deeper question, but our literature is subsidized at a blow. Hitherto we have been to them a strange country; the few books that reached them they criticised with complimentary jealousy, or with the courtesy due to a stranger; while our themes and our political structures were looked on with the advantage of distance, undemeaned by acquaintance with sources or familiarity with details. While all our material is thrown open to English authors, we gain no-

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thing in exchange, for, with the instinct of descendants, we have continued to look back to our fathers, and our conversance with the wells of English literature was as complete as their own.

The *young* American author is the principal sufferer by the change. Imagine an actor compelled to make a *début* without rehearsal, and you get a faint shadow of what he has lost. It was some advantage, let me tell you, dear Doctor, to have run the gauntlet of criticism in America before being heard of in England. When Irving and Cooper first appeared as authors abroad, they sprung to sight like Minerva, full-grown. They had seen themselves in print, had reflected and improved upon private and public criticism, and were made aware of their faults before they were irrecoverably committed on this higher theatre. Keats died of a rebuke to his puerilities, which, had it been administered here, would have been borne up against with the hope of higher appeal and new effort. He might have been the son of an *American* apothecary, and never be told by an *English* critic to "return to his gallipots." The Atlantic was, hitherto, a friendly Lethe, in which the sins of youth, (so heavily and unjustly visited on aspirants to fame,) were washed out and forgotten. The American, "licked into shape" by the efficient tongues of envy and jealousy at home, stepped ashore in England, wary and guarded against himself and others. The book by which he made himself known, might have been the successful effort after twenty failures, and it met with the indulgence of a first. The cloud of his failures, the re-

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membrance of his degradations by ridicule, were left behind. His practised skill was measured by others' beginnings.

We suffer, too, in our social position, in England. We have sunk from the stranger to the suburban or provincial. In a year or two every feature and detail of our country will be as well known to English society as those of Margate and Brighton. Our similarity to themselves in most things will not add to their respect for us. We shall have the second place accorded to the indigenous society of well-known places of resort or travel, and to be an American will be in England like being a Maltese or an East Indian—every way inferior, in short, to a metropolitan in London.

You see, my dear Doctor, how I make my correspondence with you serve as a trap for my stray thoughts; and you will say, that in this letter I have caught some that might as well have escaped. But as the immortal Jack "turned" even "diseases to commodity," and as '*la superiorité est une infirmité sociale*,' perhaps you will tolerate my dulness, or consider it a polite avoidance of your envy. Write me better or worse, however, and I will shape a welcome to it.

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LETTER XVII.

Do you remember, my dear Doctor, in one of the Elizabethan dramas, (I forget which,) the description of the contention between the nightingale and the page's lute? Did you ever remark how a bird, sitting silent in a tree, will trill out, at the first note which breaks the stillness, as if it had waited for that signal to begin? Have you noticed the emulation of pigs in a pasture—how the galloping by of a horse in the road sets them off for a race to the limits of the cross-fence?

I have been sitting here with my feet upon the autumn leaves, portfolio on knee, for an hour. The shadow of the bridge cuts a line across my breast, leaving my thinking machinery in shadow, while the farmer portion of me mellows in the sun; the air is as still as if we had suddenly ceased to hear the growing of the grain, and the brooks runs leaf-shod over the pebbles like a child frightened by the silence into a whisper. You would say this was the very mark and fashion of an hour for the silent sympathy of letter-writing. Yet here have I sat, with the temptation of an unblotted sheet before me, and my heart and thoughts full and ready, and by my

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steady gazing in the brook, you would fancy I had taken the sun's function to myself, and was sitting idle to shine. All at once from the open window of the cottage poured a passionate outbreak of Beethoven's music, (played by the beloved hand,) and with a kind of fear that I should not overtake it, and a resistless desire (which, I dare say, you have felt in hearing music) to appropriate such angelic utterance to the expression of my own feelings, I forthwith started into a scribble, and have filled my first page as you see—without drawing nib. If turning over the leaf break not the charm, you are likely to have an answer writ to your last before the shadow on my breast creep two buttons downward.

Your letter was short, and if this were not the commencement of a new score, I should complain of it more gravely. Writing so soon after we had parted, you might claim that you had little to say; yet I thought (over that broiled oyster after the play) that your voluble discourse would "put a girdle round the earth" in less time than Ariel. I listened to you as a child looks at the river, wondering when it would all run by. Yet that might be partly disuse in listening—for I have grown rustic with a year's seclusion. I found it in other things. My feet swelled with walking on the pavement. My eyes were giddy with the multitude of people. My mouth became parched with the excitement of greetings, and surprises, and the raising of my tones to the metropolitan pitch. I was nearly exhausted by mid-day with the "infinite deal of nothing."

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Homœopathy alone can explain why "patter *versus* clatter" did not finish me quite.

Ah! how admirably Charles Matthews played that night! The papers have well named him the Mercury of comedians. His playing will probably create a new school of play-*writing*—something like what he has aimed at (without sufficient study) in the pieces he has written for himself. The finest thing I could imagine in the dramatic way, would be a partnership (*à la* Beaumont and Fletcher) between the stage knowledge and comic talent of Matthews, and the penetrating, natural and observant humor of Boz. The true "humor of the time" has scarcely been reached, on the stage, since Molière; and it seems to me, that a union of the talents of these two men (both very young) might bring about a new era in high comedy. Matthews has the advantage of having been from boyhood conversant with the most polished society. He was taken to Italy when a boy by one of the most munificent and gay noblemen of England, an intimate of his father, and, if I have been rightly informed, was his companion for several years of foreign residence and travel. I remember meeting him at a dinner-party in London three or four years since, when probably he had never thought seriously of the stage. Yet at that time it was remarked by the person who sat next me, that a better actor than his father was spoiled in the son. He was making no particular effort at humor on the occasion to which I refer; but the servants, including a fat butler of remarkable gravity, were forced to ask permission to leave the room—their laugh-

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ter becoming uncontrollable. He would doubtless have doubled his profits in this country had he come as a single star; but I trust his success will still be sufficient to establish him in an annual orbit—from east to west.

One goes to the city with fresh eyes after a year's absence, and I was struck with one or two things, which, in their gradual wax or wane, you do not seem to have remarked. What *Te Deum* has been chanted, for example, over the almost complete disappearance of the dandies? I saw but two while I was in New-York, and in them it was nature's caprice. They would have been dandies equally in fig-leaves or wampum. The era of (studiously) plain clothes arrived some years ago in England, where Count D'Orsay, and an occasional wanderer from Broadway, are the only freshly-remembered apparitions of excessively dressed men; and slow as has been its advent to us, it is sooner come than was predicted. I feared, for one, that our European reputation of being the most expensive and showy of nations was based upon the natural extreme of our political character, and would last as long as the republic. I am afraid still, that the ostentation once shown in dress is but turned into another channel, and that the equipages of New-York more than supply the showiness abated in the costume. But even this is a step onward. Finery on the horse is better than finery on the owner. The caparison of an equipage is a more manly study than the toilet of the fine gentleman; and possesses, besides, the advantage of being left properly to the saddler. On the whole, it struck me that the *countenance* of Broad-

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way had lost a certain flimsy and tinsel character with which it used to impress me, and had, in a manner, grown hearty and unpretentious. I should be glad to know (and none can tell me better than yourself) whether this is the outer seeming of deeper changes in our character. Streets have expressive faces, and I have long marked and trusted them. It would be difficult to feel fantastic in the sumptuous gravity of Bond Street—as difficult to feel grave in the bright airiness of the Boulevard. In these two thoroughfares you are made to feel the distinctive qualities of England and France. What say you of the changed expression of Broadway?

Miss Martineau, of all travellers, has doubtless written the most salutary book upon our manners, (*malgré* the womanish pique which distorted her judgment of Everett and others,) but there is one reproach which she has recorded against us, in which I have felt some patriotic glory, but which I am beginning to fear we deserve no longer. The text of her fault-finding is the Quixotic attention of Americans to women in public conveyances, *apropos* of a gentleman's politeness who took an outside seat upon a coach to give a lady room for her feet. From what I could observe in my late two or three days' travel, I think I could encourage Miss Martineau to return to America with but a trifling risk of being too particularly attended to, even were she *incognita* and young. We owe this *décadence* of chivalry to Miss Martineau, I think it may be safely said. In a country where every person of common education reads every book of travels in which his manners are discussed, the most casual men-

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tion of a blemish, even by a less authority than Miss Martineau, acts as an instant cautery. I venture to say that a young lady could scarcely be found in the United States, who would not give you on demand a complete list of our national faults and foibles, as recorded by Hall, Hamilton, Trollope, and Martineau. Why, they form the commmon staple of conversation and jest. Ay, and of speculation! Hamilton's book was scarcely dry from the press before orders were made out to an immense extent for egg-cups and silver forks. Mrs. Trollope quite extinguished the trade in spit-boxes, and made fortunes for the finger-glass manufacturers; and Captain Marryatt, I understand, is besieged in every city by the importers, to know upon what deficiency of table furniture he intends to be severe. It has been more than once suggested (and his manners aided the idea) that Hamilton was probably a travelling agent for the plated-fork manufactories of Birmingham. And a fair *caveat* to both readers and reviewers of future books of travels, would be an inquiry touching their probable bearing on English manufacturers. I would not be illiberal to Miss Martineau, but I would ask any candid person whether the influx of thick shoes and cotton stockings simultaneously with her arrival in this country, could have been entirely an unpremeditated coincidence?

We are indebted, I think, to the Astor House, for one of the pleasantest changes that I noticed while away—and I like it the better, that it is a departure from our general rule of imitating English habits too exclusively. You were with us there, and can bear witness to the de-

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lightful society we met at the ladies' ordinary; while the excellence of the table and service, and the prevalence of well-bred company, had drawn the most exclusive from their private parlors, and given to the daily society of the drawing-room the character of the gay and agreeable watering-places of Germany. The solitary confinement of English hotels always seemed to me particularly unsuited to the position and wants of the traveller. Loneliness is no evil at home, where books and regular means of employment are at hand; but to be abandoned to four walls and a portmanteau, in a strange city, of a rainy day, is what nothing but an Englishman would dream of calling comfortable. It was no small relief to *us*, on that drizzling and chilly autumn day, which you remember, to descend to a magnificent drawing-room, filled with some fifty or a hundred well-bred people, and pass away the hours as they would be passed under similar circumstances in a hospitable country-house in England. The beautiful architecture of the Astor apartments, and the sumptuous elegance of the furniture and table service, make it in a measure a peculiarity of the house; but the example is likely to be followed in other hotels and cities, and I hope it will become a national habit, as in Germany, for strangers to meet at their meals and in the public rooms. Life seems to me too short for English exclusiveness in travel.

I determined to come home by Wyoming, after you left us, and took the boat to Philadelphia accordingly. We passed two or three days in that clean and pleasant city, and among other things made an excursion to Lau-

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rel Hill—certainly the most beautiful cemetery in the world after the Necropolis of Scutari. Indeed, the spot is selected with something like Turkish feeling; for it seems as if it were intended to associate the visits to the resting-places of the departed more with our pleasures than our duties. The cemetery occupies a lofty promontory above the Schuylkill, possessing the inequality of surface so favorable to the object, and shaded with pines and other ornamental trees of great age and beauty. The views down upon the river, and through the sombre glades and alleys of the burial-grounds, are unsurpassed for sweetness and repose. The elegance which marks every thing Philadelphian, is shown already in the few monuments erected. An imposing gateway leads you in from the high road, and a freestone group, large as life, representing old Mortality at work on an inscription, and Scott leaning upon a tombstone to watch his toil, faces the entrance. I noticed the area of one tomb enclosed by a chain of hearts, cast beautifully in iron. The whole was laid out in gravel-walks, and there was no grave without its flowers. I confess the spirit of this sweet spot affected me deeply, and I look upon this, and Mount Auburn at Cambridge, as delightful indications of a purer growth in our national character than politics and money-getting. It is a real-life poetry, which reflects as much glory upon the age as the birth of a Homer.

The sun has crept down to my paper, dear Doctor, and the shadow of the bridge falls cooler than is good

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for my rheumatism. I wish that the blessing of Ceres upon Ferdinand and Miranda,

> "Spring come to you at farthest,
> In the very end of harvest,"

might light on Glenmary. I enjoy winter when it comes, but its approach is altogether detestable. It is delightful to get home, however; for, like Prospero, in the play I have just quoted, there is a "delicate Ariel," (content,) who only waits on me in solitude. You will carry out the allegory, and tell me I have *Caliban* too, but to the rudeness of country monsters, I take as kindly as Trinculo. And now I must to the woods, and by the aid of these same "ancient and fish-like" monsters, transplant me a tree or two before sunset. Adieu.

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LETTER XVIII.

Our summer friends are flown, dear Doctor; not a leaf on the dogwood worth watching, though its fluted leaves were the last. Still the cottage looks summery when the sun shines, for the fir-trees, which were half lost among the flauntings of the deciduous foliage, look out green and unchanged from the naked branches of the grove, with neither reproach for our neglect, nor boast over the departed. They are like friends, who, in thinking of our need, forget all they have laid up against us; and, between them and the lofty spirits of mankind, there is another point of resemblance which I am woodsman enough to know. Hew down these gay trees, whose leaves scatter at the coming of winter, and they will sprout from the trodden root more vigorously than before. The evergreen, once struck to the heart, dies. If you are of my mind, you would rather learn such a pretty mock of yourself in nature, than catch a fish with a gold ring in his maw.

A day or two since, very much such another bit of country wisdom dropped into my ears, which I thought might be available in poetry, albeit the proof be unpoetical. Talking with my neighbor, the miller, about saw-

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ing lumber for a stable I am building, I discovered, incidentally, that the mill will do more work between sunset and dawn, than in the same number of hours by daylight. Without reasoning] upon it, the miller knows practically that *streams run faster at night.* The increased heaviness of the air, and the withdrawal of the attraction of light, are probably the causes. But there is a neat tail for a sonnet coiled up in the fact, and you may blow it with a long breath to Tom Moore.

Many thanks for your offer of shopping for us, but you do injustice to the "cash stores" of Owego when you presume that there is any thing short of "a hair off the great Cham's beard," which is not found in their inventory. By the way, there is one article of which I feel the daily want, and as you live among authors who procure them ready-made for ballads and romances, perhaps you can send me one before the canal freezes. I mean a venerable hermit, who, having passed through all the vicissitudes of human life, shall have nothing earthly to occupy him but to live in the woods and dispense wisdom, gratis, to all comers. I don't know whether, in your giddy town vocations, it has ever occurred to you to turn short upon yourself, in the midst of some grave but insignificant routine, and inquire (of the gentlemen within) whether this is the fulfilment of your destiny; whether these little nothings are the links near your eye of the great chain, which you fancy, in your elevated hours, connects you with something kindred to the stars. It is oftenest in fine weather that I thus step out of myself, and retiring a little space, borrow the eyes of my

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better angel, and take a look at the individual I have evacuated. You shall see him yourself, dear Doctor, with three strokes of the pen; and in giving your judgment of the dignity of his pursuits, perform the office to which I destine the hermit above bespoken.

It is not the stout fellow, with the black London hat, somewhat rusty, who stands raking away cobs from the barn-floor, though the hat has seen worshipful society, (having fallen on those blessed days when hats are as inseparable from the wearer as silk stocking or culotte,) and sports that breadth of brim by which you know me as far off as your indigenous omnibus. That's Jem, the groom, to whom, with all its reminiscences, the hat is but a tile. Nor is it the half sailor-looking, world-worn, never-smiling man, who is plying a flail upon that floor of corn, with a look as if he had learned the stroke with a cutlass, though in his ripped and shredded upper garment, you might recognize the frogged and velveted *redingote*, native of the Rue de la Paix, which has fluttered on the Symplegades, and flapped the dust of the Acropolis. That is my tenant in the wood, who, having passed his youth and middle age with little content in a more responsible sphere of life, has limited his wishes to solitude and a supply of the wants of nature; and though quite capable of telling story for story with my old fellow-traveller, probably thinks of it only to wish its ravelled frogs were horn buttons, and its bursted seams less penetrable by the rain.

A third person is one of my neighbors, who can see nothing done without showing you a "'cuter way," and

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who, sitting on the sill of the barn, is amusing himself, quite of his own accord, with beheading, cleaning, and picking an unfortunate duck, whose leg was accidentally broken by the flail. His voluntary occupation is stimulated by neither interest nor good nature, but is simply the itching to be doing something, which, in one shape or another, belongs to every genuine Jonathan. Near him, in cow-hide boots, frock of fustian, and broad-brimmed sombrero of coarse straw, stands, breathing from a bout with the flail, the individual from whom I have stepped apart, and upon whose morning's worth of existence you shall put a philosopher's estimate.

I presume my three hours' labor might be done for about three shillings—my mind, meantime, being entirely occupied with what I was about, calculating the number of bushels to the acre, the price of corn farther down the river, and between whiles, discussing the merits of a patent corn-sheller, which we had abandoned for the more laborious but quicker process of thrashing.

"Purty 'cute tool!" says my neighbor, giving the machine a look out of the corner of his yellow eye, "but teoo slow! Corn ought to come off ravin' distracted. 'Taint no use to eat it up in labor. Where was that got out?"

"'Twas invented in Albany, I rather think."

"Wal, I guess t'want. It's a Varmount notion. Rot them Green Mountingeers! they're a spiling the country. People won't work when them things lay round. Have you heern of a machine for buttoning your gallowses behind?"

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"No, I have not."

"Wal, I've been expecting on't. There aint no other hard work they haint economized. Is them your hogs in the garding?"

Three vast porkers had nosed open the gate, during the discussion, and were making the best of their opportunities. After a vigorous chase, the latch was closed upon them securely, and my neighbor resumed his duck.

"Is there no way of forcing people to keep those brutes at home," I asked of my silent tenant.

"Yes, Sir. The law provides that you may shut them up, and send word to the owners to come and take them away."

"Wal! It's a chore, if you ever tried it, to catch a hog if he's middlin' spry, and when he's cotch, you've got to feed him, by law, till he's sent for; and it don't pay, mister."

"But you can charge for the feed," says the other.

"Pesky little, I tell ye. Pig fodder 's cheap, and they don't pay you for carrying on't to 'em, nor for catching the critters. It's a losin' consarn."

"Suppose I shoot them."

"Sartin you can. The owner 'll put his vally on it, and you can have as much pork at that price as 'll fill your barn. The hull neighb'r'hood 'll drive their hogs into your garding."

I saw that my neighbor had looked at the matter all round; but I was sure, from his manner, that he could, if encouraged, suggest a remedy for the nuisance.

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"I would give a bushel of that handsome corn," said I, "to know how to be rid of them."

"Be so perlite as to measure it out, mister, while I head in that hog. I'll show you how the deacon kept 'em out of the new buryin' ground while the fence was buildin'."

He laid down the duck, which was, by this time, fairly picked, and stood a moment looking at the three hogs, now leisurely turning up the grass at the road-side. For a reason which I did not at the moment conceive, he presently made a dash at the thinnest of the three, a hungry-looking brute, built with an approach to the grey-hound, and missed catching him by an arm's length. Unluckily for the hog, however, the road was lined with crooked rail-fence, which deceived him with constant promise of escape by a short turn, and by skilful heading off, and a most industrious chase of some fifteen minutes, he was cornered at last, and secured by the hind leg.

"A hog," said he, dragging him along with the greatest gravity, "hates a straight line like pizen. If they'd run right in eend, you'd never catch 'em in natur. Like some folks, aint it? Boy, fetch me a skrimmage of them whole corn."

He drove the hog before him, wheelbarrow fashion, into an open cow-pen, and put up the bars. The boy (his son, who had been waiting for him outside the barn) brought him a few ears of ripe corn, and as soon as the hog had recovered his breath a little, he threw them into the pen, and drew out a knife from his pocket, which he whetted on the rail before him.

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"Now," said he, as the voracious animal, unaccustomed to such appetizing food, seized ravenously on the corn, "it's accordin' to law to take up a stray hog and feed him, aint it?"

"Certainly."

By this time the greedy creature began to show symptoms of choking, and my friend's design became clearer.

"And it's christian charity," he continued, letting down the bars, and stepping in as the hog rolled upon his side, "not to let your neighbor lose his critters by choking, if you can kill 'em in time to save their meat, ain't it?"

"Certainly."

"Wal!" said he, cutting the animal's throat, "you can send word to the owner o' that pork to come and take it away, and if he don't like to salt down at a minute's notice, he'll keep the rest at hum, and pay you for your corn. And that's the way the deacon sarved my hogs, darn his long face, and I eat pork till I was sick of the sight on't."

A bushel of corn being worth about six shillings, I had paid twice the worth of my own morning's work for this very Yankee expedient. My neighbor borrowed a bag, shouldered his grist, and trudged off to the mill, and relinquishing my flail to Jem, I leaned over the fence in the warm autumn sunshine, and with my eyes on the swift yet still bosom of the river below, fell to wondering, as I said before, whether the hour of which I have given you the picture, was a fitting link in a wise man's destiny. The day was one to give birth to great resolves,

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bright, elastic, and genial; and the leafless trees, so lorn and comfortless in cloudier times, seemed lifting into the sky with heroic endurance, while the swollen Owaga, flowing on with twice the summer's depth, seemed gathering soul to defy the fetters of winter. There was something inharmonious with little pursuits in every thing I could see. Such air and sunshine, I thought, should overtake one in some labor of philanthropy, in some sacrifice for friend or country, in the glow of some noble composition, or, if in the exercise of physical energy, at least to some large profit. Yet a few shillings expressed the whole result of my morning's employment, and the society by which my thoughts had been colored were such as I have described. Still this is "farming," and so lived Cincinnatus.

Now, dear Doctor, you can be grand among your gallipots, and if your eye turns in upon yourself, you may reflect complacently on the almost sublime ends of the art of healing; but resolve me, if you please, *my* little problem. What state of the weather should I live up to? My present avocations, well enough in a gray day, or a rainy, or a raw, are quite put out of countenance by a blue sky and a genial sun. If it were always like to-day, I should be obliged to seek distinction in some way. There would be no looking such a sky in the face three days consecutively, busied always with pigs and corn. You see the use of a hermit to settle such points.

I am reminded now, I scarce know by what, of a story of a lark I was reading last night in a child's book, called "The Story without an End," translated from the Ger-

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man by Mrs. Austin. By the way, call upon Colman, and ask him to re-publish it; for, besides being the sweetest child's book in the world, it is a prose poem of most exquisite beauty. A child is represented walking forth into the fields, and getting lessons in happiness and duty from plants, insects and birds, all of which own him for their prince, and converse with him. "The tender moss pressed his little feet, and the delicate grass embraced his knees, and the flowers kissed his hands, and even the branches stroked his cheeks with a kind and refreshing touch. There was no end to his delight. The little birds warbled and sang, and fluttered and hopped about, and the delicate wood-flowers gave out their beauty and their odors; and *every sweet sound took a sweet odor by the hand, and thus walked through the open door of the child's heart*, and held a joyous dance therein. But the nightingale and lily of the valley led the dance. And the nightingale was never weary of repeating the same thing a hundred times over, for the spring of love which gushed from his heart was ever new; and the lily bowed her head bashfully, that no one might see her glowing heart. And yet the one lived so solely and entirely in the other, that *no one could see whether the notes of the nightingale were floating lilies, or the lilies visible notes falling like dew-drops from the nightingale's throat.*"

Is not that beautiful? I would send you the whole book, (a hundred pages of such poetry, with wood engravings of exquisite finish;) but I trust to see a New-York copy on your table. The part of it that occurred to me, apropos of my aspirations after a higher vocation,

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was a brief episode, with which I will fill this remaining page, and a more impressive and pure lesson was never written out for child or man. "The child walked forth alone upon the fresh, dewy corn-field. A thousand little suns glittered in his eyes, and a lark soared warbling above his head. And the lark proclaimed the joys of the coming year, and awakened endless hopes, while she soared circling higher and higher, till, at length, her song was like the soft whisper of an angel holding converse with the spring under the blue arch of heaven. The child had seen the earth-colored bird rise up before him, and it seemed to him as if the earth had sent her forth from her bosom as a messenger to carry her thanks and her joy up to the sun. And the lark hung poised above the hope-giving field, and warbled her clear and joyous song. She sang of the loveliness of the rosy dawn, and the fresh brilliancy of the earliest sunbeams; of the gladsome springing of the young flowers, and the vigorous shooting of the corn; and her song pleased the child beyond measure. But the lark wheeled in higher and higher circles, and her song sounded softer and sweeter. And now she sang of the first delights of early love; of wanderings together on the sunny, fresh hill-tops, and of the sweet pictures and visions that arise out of the blue and misty distance. The child understood not rightly what he heard, and fain would he have understood, for he thought that even in such visions must be wondrous delight. He gazed aloft after the unwearied bird, but she had disappeared in the morning mist. Then the child leaned his head on one shoulder to listen

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if he could no longer hear the little messenger of spring, and he could just catch the distant and quivering notes in which she sang of the fervent longing after the clear element of freedom, and the pure and all present light. But the lark now dropped suddenly to the earth, for her little body was too heavy for the ambient ether, and her wings were not large nor strong enough for the pure element.

"Then the red corn-poppies laughed at the homely-looking bird, and cried to one another and to the surrounding blades of corn, 'Now, indeed, you may see what comes of flying so high, and striving and straining after mere air; people only lose their time, and bring back nothing but weary wings and an empty stomach.' But a cyane said, in a soft voice, 'Dear friends, the lark is indeed weary, and the space into which she has flown is void; but the void is not what the lark sought, nor is the seeker returned empty home. She strove after light and freedom, and light and freedom has she proclaimed. And if earth has called her back, it can keep nothing of her but what is its own. Her sweet voice and her soaring wings belong to the sun, and will enter into light and freedom long after the foolish prater shall have sunk and been buried in the dark prison of the earth.' And the lark heard her wise and friendly discourse, and with renewed strength she sprang once more into the clear and beautiful blue. Then the child clapped his little hands for joy."

That should be read with Sir Philip Sydney's Defence of Poesy. But adieu, while I have room to write it.

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FIRESIDE

EDUCATION.

"Since custom is the principal magistrate of man's life, let men by all means endeavor to obtain good customs. Certainly custom is most perfect when it beginneth in young years; this we call Education, which is in effect but early custom."

Bacon.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

PETER PARLEY'S TALES.

NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL COLMAN,
VIII. ASTOR HOUSE, BROADWAY.
1839.

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lowing pages is briefly this: man comes into existence marked by his Creator as the subject of a peculiar design, which is, that he shall reach the perfection of his being through education. This point I illustrate by comparisons, showing that while all the animal races are incapable of being benefited by instruction, and obtain their perfection without it, man can only receive the full development of his physical, intellectual and moral faculties through a process of teaching and training.

While man thus stands in contrast to every other living thing as the subject of education, it is to be remarked, as a part of the same great scheme of Providence, that the controlling lessons of life, those which last the longest, those which result in fixed habits and permanent tastes, and usually determine the character for good or ill, are given in early life; that they are given at the fireside seminary; and that here the parent, as well by the ordinance of God as the institutions of society, is the teacher. The responsibility of the parent is inferred from these premises. If they are founded in truth, it would seem that every reflecting father and mother must feel, that, after a provision for the comforts of life, education, in its true and full sense—the developing and perfecting the various physical, moral and intellectual faculties of their children—is the first and strongest duty; and that to sacrifice this, or any part of this, for the purpose of acquiring wealth, or station, or honor, or any other worldly interest, whether designed for parent or child, is but a surrender to an inferior good and a lesser obligation, of the greatest benefit and the highest trust. The Great Lawgiver has nowhere said to parents, bestow wealth, honor or power on your children, but he has said to them, by the very constitution of human nature, educate your

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children wisely, if you would train them up to fulfil their duty and their destiny—if you would ensure their escape from misery or promote their chance of happiness. It is for parents to decide whether they will follow the plan of One who sees the end from the beginning, or be seduced into dangerous and fatal error—dangerous and fatal as well to their own peace as to that of their children—by the suggestions of worldly vanity or current prejudice.

In this volume, I address myself specially to parents, though I deem that the subject may well claim the attention of teachers, of guardians of children, and indeed of every member of society. It demands of those who are called to the high trust of legislation, whether in our state or national assemblies, as well as of all others in authority, deep and careful consideration. The poet has said that "the proper study of mankind is man." In treating of education, we are but seeking the best mode of influencing man's character. Our first step is, then, to understand man's nature. The inquiry into this is that study which is rightly affirmed to be the proper business of all. But parents have a higher interest and a more imperative duty than others, connected with this subject. They are the lawgivers of their children. They lay down the chart by which those whom God gives them, are to regulate the voyage of life. Whether this voyage, therefore, be disastrous or successful, mainly depends on parents.

Having endeavored to show the power and responsibility of parents in respect to education, I have then attempted to point out the proper course to be pursued in the government, training and instruction of children. The hints I have given are chiefly drawn from observation, but they are only offered as hints, subject to the

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revision of those more experienced than myself. At all events, the subject is of great importance, and though I may not have furnished the parent a manual which may serve as a guide in the high task of training his children in the way in which they should go, I may still succeed in rousing him to inquiry, and this will be a great point gained.

I have but to add, that if, in the following pages, I may sometimes appear to be repetitious, I hope it may be excused, from the obvious importance of impressing certain leading points upon the mind of the reader; and that if I often use familiar illustrations, it may be deemed compatible with the design of a work intended for general circulation, and in the preparation of which practical effect, not rhetorical daintiness, should be the guide of the writer.

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JOHN SMITH'S LETTERS,

WITH

'PICTERS' TO MATCH.

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JOHN SMITH'S LETTERS,

WITH

'PICTERS' TO MATCH.

CONTAINING

REASONS WHY JOHN SMITH SHOULD NOT CHANGE HIS NAME;

MISS DEBBY SMITH'S JUVENILE SPIRIT;

TOGETHER WITH

THE ONLY AUTHENTIC HISTORY EXTANT OF THE LATE WAR IN OUR

DISPUTED TERRITORY.

"Is John Smith within?
Yes, that he is."
MOTHER GOOSE.

NEW-YORK:
PUBLISHED BY SAMUEL COLMAN,
NO. 8 ASTOR HOUSE, BROADWAY.

1839.

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TO

UNCLE JOSHUA DOWNING,

POSTMASTER OF DOWNINGVILLE IN THE STATE OF MAINE,

THE HONEST MAN, THE TRUE BLUE REPUBLICAN, THE STAUNCH FRIEND OF MAJOR JACK DOWNING AND GINERAL JACKSON,

THIS BOOK

IS DEDICATED WITH THE HIGHEST RESPECTS OF

THE AUTHOR.

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SMITHVILLE, DOWN EAST, IN THE STATE OF MAINE.

April 25, 1839.

To Mr. Samuel Colman, No. 8 *Astor House, New-York.*

Dear Sir:

I SEE by some of the papers that you are a goin' to put out a book, containing my letters that I've been writing to the New-York Mirror. That I should ever come to be the writer of a book is what I never expected; but strange things happens now days; and if you think the letters that I and my son John have writ, are worth making into a book, I'm willing you should do it. If you are a goin' to have picters in it, as the papers say you be, I wish you would send me a few of 'em, for there's nothing in this world that my children likes to see so well as they do picters.

Cousin Debby says it is the fashion, when any body puts out a book, to have it dedicated to some body; and if you should think it best to put in a dedication, I want it to be to uncle Joshua Downing, of Downingville, out of respect I feel for the memory of my cousin, Major Jack Downing. I don't mean none of your New-York counterfeit Jack Downings, that stole my cousin Jack's name, but my own dear cousin, the Major, that writ all his letters in the Portland Courier, and the Downing Gazette, printed in Portland, State of Maine. I send a dedication that you can put in, if you think it is best.

Your friend and well-wisher,

JOHN SMITH, *Esquire.*

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